SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL: BUSH'S NEW VULNERABILITY

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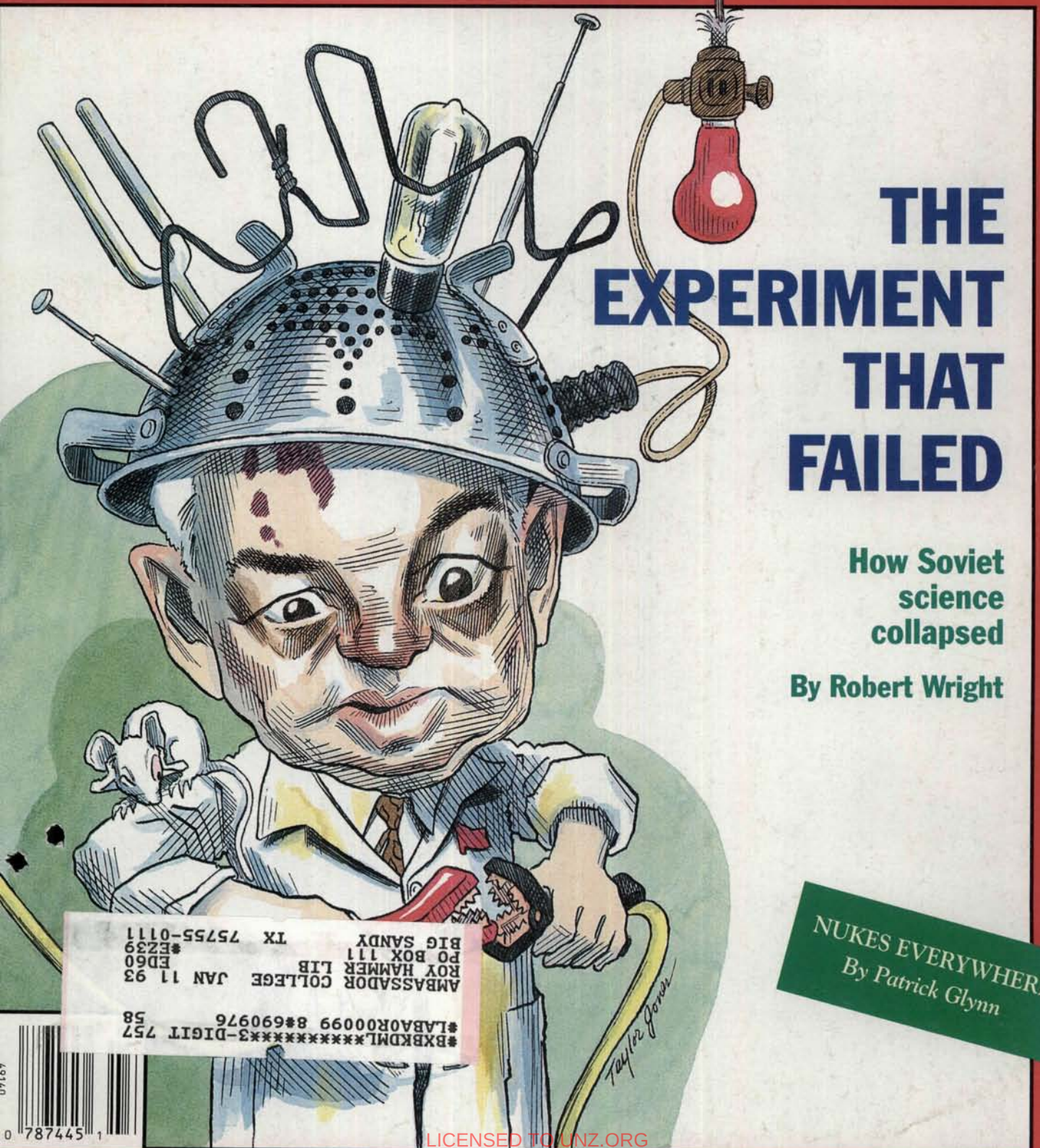
THE NEW REPUBLIC

Paul Fussell, snob · Jean-Bertrand Aristide, neophyte · Muhammad Ali, dissident



THE EXPERIMENT THAT FAILED

How Soviet science collapsed

By Robert Wright

NUKES EVERYWHERE
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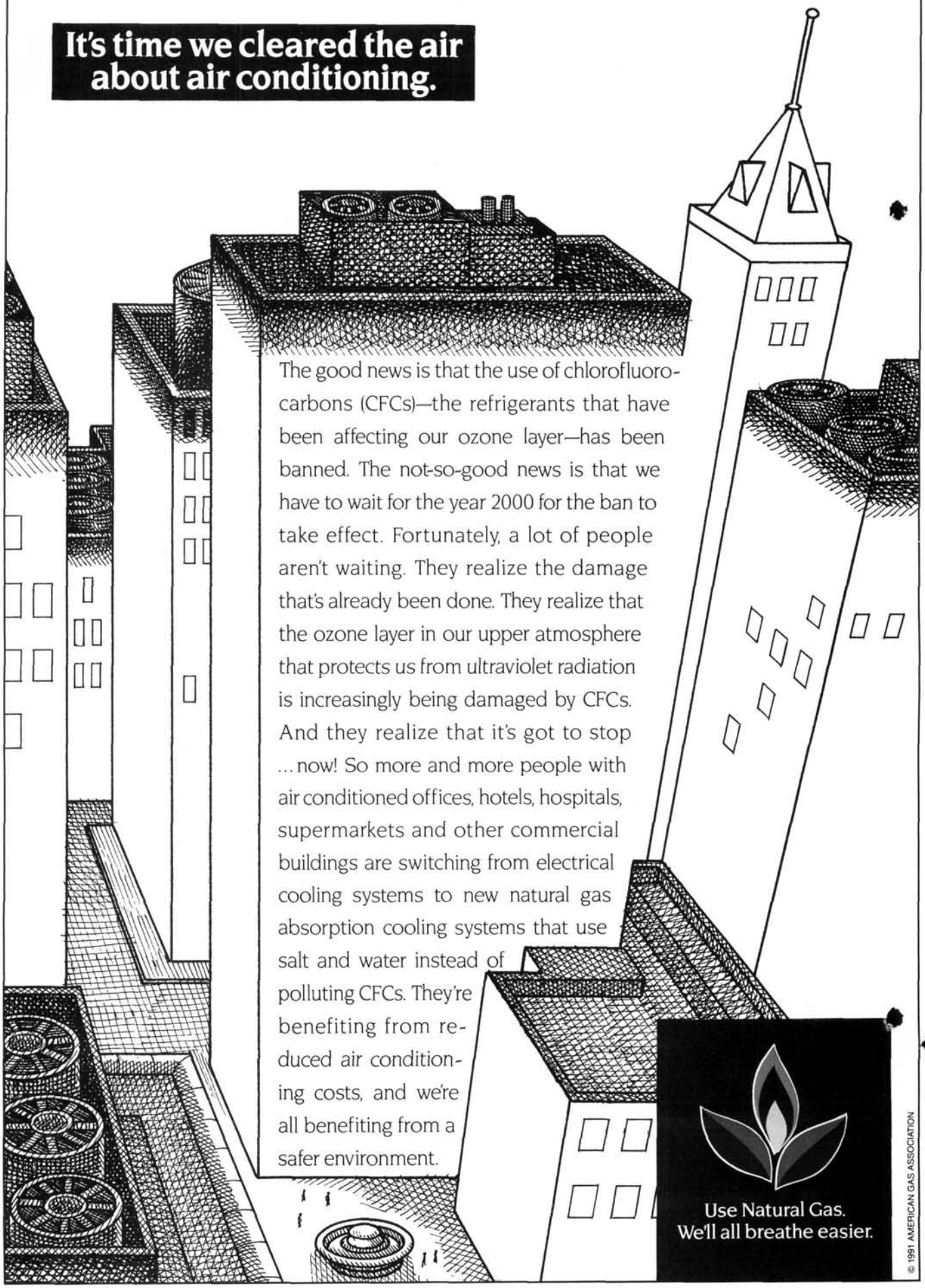

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

OCTOBER 28, 1991

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WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,006

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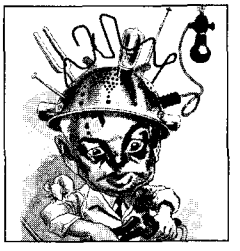

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 205, Number 18, Issue 4,006, October 28, 1991. (Printed in the U.S. on October 9, 1991.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 7 & 14, July 15 & 22, Aug. 19 & 26, and Sept. 16 & 23, 1991) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic/National Review joint advertising (212) 679-7330. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling).

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(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

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FROM WASHINGTON

It's your fault

Everyone can agree that congressional check-kiting and related scandals, though small matters in themselves, are symbolic of a larger problem in American democracy. We just might disagree about what that larger problem is. The problem as generally presented is that members of Congress dwell in an inside-the-Beltway cocoon of special privileges, isolated from the concerns of the real world. The fact that they can't keep their own accounts in order is taken as a metaphor for the mess they've made of the government budget.

It's a metaphor, all right. My favorite aspect of the story is the hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid bills at the House restaurant and catering service. It turns out that most of this money is actually owed by constituent groups that get a member's authorization to use House catering facilities and then stiff him or her for the bill. The member, being a politician, is naturally hesitant to press for payment.

So the dining bills are indeed just like the federal budget. The citizenry makes demands for benefits, refuses to pay for them, runs up a huge tab called the national debt, then blames the politicians for being irresponsible, spendthrift, etc. etc. etc. This is not to say that the politicians are blameless. But they are far from entirely to blame.

The check-kiting story is generating a whole new wave of anti-Washington posturing identified as "populism." I'm not sure what "populism" means, but if this is it, it is smugger and more complacent than any common form of inside-the-Beltway elitism. It has been taken up by columnists and commentators who make many times what a member of Congress does, and are far more steeped in the culture of Washington than a congressman who goes home every weekend. Editorial writers at *The Wall Street Journal* join the chorus from their aerie at the World Financial Center in downtown New York.

The last outbreak of this virus was a year ago, when the government almost shut down as Congress and President Bush struggled to produce the controversial budget agreement. Bush himself preposterously piled it on: "Oh, how nice it is to be out where the real people are, outside of Washington," he said while campaigning in Nebraska. A Tampa, Florida, retiree named Jack Gargen bought himself some publicity with newspaper ads declaring, "I'm appalled ... I'm bitter ... I'm outraged ... I'm angry ... I'm incensed ... I'm livid ... I'm even more livid ..." at various congressional malefactions. He announced an organization called THRO, for "Throw the Hypocritical Rascals Out."

Unfortunately, the blight of hypocrisy is not restricted to within the Washington Beltway. Even Mr. Gargen was afflicted. Although he was "appalled" by the national debt and "outraged" at the thought of higher taxes to reduce it, he offered no alternatives besides the usual red herrings: "sheer government waste," Food Stamps for people wearing designer jeans, and so on. He opposed "federal giveaway programs," but stood like Horatio at the Bridge against any imposition on "our retired senior citizens"—who are, of course, the overwhelming beneficiaries of federal giveaways. In his hypocrisy, Mr. Gargen was exactly what he professed to be: the voice of the American Everyman.

You could lock any two ideologues of the left and right in a room and together they could come up with a set of taxes and spending programs that was both fairer and better for the economy than the budget we have now. Provided, that is, that they didn't need to submit their handiwork to the voters for approval.

Every now and then *Time* magazine runs a special feature bewailing the supposed dearth of leadership. Maybe it's time for one bewailing the lack of followership. Americans don't want leadership. They want alchemy. True, they have been told by politicians that alchemy is possible, that the gap between the government they want and the amount they're willing to pay for it can be closed by magic. But in their hearts, they must know that's not the case. Or at least anyone carrying on about a lack of "leadership" in Washington must already know this. And it's absurd to accuse leaders of failing to persuade you of something you already know.

It's even more absurd to vote time and again for leaders you believe have failed, and then to demand their mass removal. Goodness knows our elected leaders, most of them, would win no prize at a medium-sized state fair. But who elected

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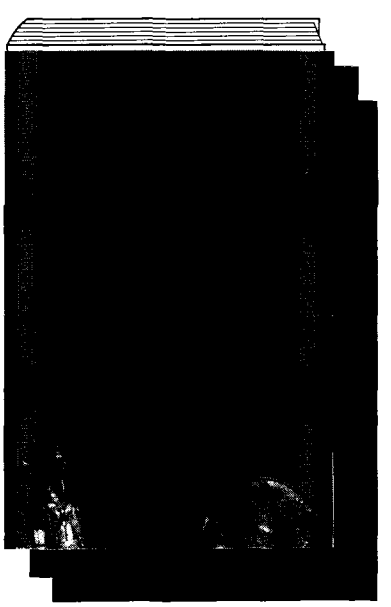

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AMERICAN TEACHER

BY ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Vouchers and Load Shedding

The Agenda for Privatization

Many people who support education vouchers, which would allow public dollars to follow students to private schools, do so out of the best of motives. They believe that competition with private schools would encourage excellence in the public schools. Other people are concerned about fairness. Well-to-do parents already have choice: They can either move to an area where the public schools have a good reputation or send their kids to private schools. But what about poor families whose kids are stuck in bad neighborhood schools? Why shouldn't they have choice, too?

It's hard to fault concerns like these, even if the evidence shows that vouchers would not encourage excellence or ensure a better education for poor children. But many voucher supporters have an entirely different agenda. For them, it's less a matter of improving public education than of terminating government support for education, whether public or private. As these people see it, government shouldn't pay for education; that's up to the families that use education. Only children whose parents can't afford to pay should get any assistance.

This idea of ending government support of education altogether is not a paranoid fantasy. It's actually proposed in a collection of articles on private school choice that was put out by an organization called the Heartland Institute and distributed to state legislatures across the country. Most of the articles offer the kind of how-to advice you'd want if you were mounting a voucher campaign. But in one of the articles, "The Case for Voluntary Funding of Education," Myron Lieberman lays out reasons for ending all government financing of education, "either directly, as [the government] currently does, or even indirectly, as it would under a voucher plan" and offers strategies to achieve this goal.

Lieberman knows that the idea of stopping government funding of education altogether is too radical to win wide support: In fact, he thinks it would turn most people off. "Incremental load shedding" is another story—that is, gradually putting the functions of public education into private hands so that parents come to bear the entire cost of educating their children.

For instance, gifted and talented and remedial instruction could be eliminated and taken over, for children whose families who could pay, by for-profit learning centers. Athletic programs, for which fitness centers offer a substitute, could go, and why not foreign languages, too? Bit by bit, government would be financing less and individual families more of their children's education.

Why would people be willing for the government to stop funding school programs? They'd probably think it was happening for budgetary reasons. But, Lieberman says, they need not know the real reason for the drying up of government funding: "If a case can be made for withdrawing government support, there is no need to relate it to broader objectives, if any. This ambiguity," Lieberman says, "is one of the strengths of an incremental approach to load shedding."

All these changes could be made, Lieberman points out, quietly and gradually. No complicated legislation would be necessary; there would be no need of "agreement...or public debate." Because gradual load shedding could be carried out without even raising the issue of privatization, Lieberman prefers it to vouchers as a technique for ending government support of education. Still, according to Lieberman's logic, although going directly to load shedding may be preferable, vouchers will get you there anyway.

Say the government institutes a voucher system, and the voucher is worth a little less than a child's education actually costs. When public schools lose funding to private schools and some students take their chits and leave the public system, some schools will close and some services or programs will be cut. The more cuts are made, the more the quality of public education will suffer and the more kids will leave. In the meantime, private schools will be free to charge whatever they think they can. Some parents will be able to pay a large supplement. Others will have to send their kids to schools that accept the voucher as payment—and since the voucher is pegged below the actual cost of educating a child, these schools will be pretty lousy.

Suppose, as costs rise, the government freezes the voucher. Over a period of time, it will cover a smaller and smaller percentage of school charges, so even private school parents who were originally helped by vouchers will be hit. And suppose, then, the government announces that, in the interests of economy, people making over a certain amount are not eligible for vouchers. Public support for education will be gone, except, of course, for the indigent, who will be cared for in the educational equivalent of charity wards.

Could this really happen? How many people are talking about getting rid of government support for education? The potential constituency, as Lieberman makes clear, is enormous: the majority of the population. Unmarried people, small, relatively well-off families, retirees—some of these groups may now be on the voucher bandwagon but in the long run, Lieberman believes, they'll all think it is in their best interest to get rid of all tax support for education, whether public or private. If that happens—well, it won't just be the people who depend on public education who'll be stuck.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Larry's tribe

To the editors:

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow and Jacob Weisberg know. I think there is plenty wrong with Larry Tribe's several positions on natural law and flag desecration, but what is the point of Jacob Weisberg's "Supreme Courtier" (September 30)? Analyses of a celebrated public scholar's work contribute to general understanding. But who cares what Mr. Weisberg thinks are the innermost springs of Larry's motivation? What I know is that people's motivations are various and that Larry had done many things that cannot be charged up to the account of ambition. This kind of thing is an example of the radiating disorder of the modern confirmation process. Gossip substituted for substance is bad enough, but gossip masquerading as substance is the pits.

And why am I writing this? Probably out of fellow-feeling for a friend and colleague, having received similar treatment at the hand of *The National Review.*

CHARLES FRIED
Cambridge, Massachusetts

The writer is Carter Professor of General Jurisprudence at Harvard Law School.

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg asserts that Laurence Tribe "unwittingly hurt his chances [of being nominated to the Supreme Court] by speaking his mind in the Bork hearings and has been desperately trying to restore them ever since." Restore them how? By being even more outspoken on the Thomas nomination? If Mr. Weisberg's thesis were correct, Mr. Tribe would simply retreat to his academic lair and look judicial.

Especially wrong-headed is Mr. Weisberg's reference to Mr. Tribe's role in *Bowers* v. *Hardwick*, in which the Supreme Court upheld Georgia's sodomy statute. In case Mr. Weisberg hasn't noticed, arguing for the rights of gay people is still unlikely to earn anyone a national popularity prize.

THOMAS B. STODDARD
New York, New York

The writer is executive director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Straining credulity

To the editors:

Promoting behavior that blocks transmission of HIV is essential in limiting the current AIDS epidemic. In "HIV's Weak Link" (October 7), Lowell Weiss attempts to develop a new rationale for such behavior modification, claiming the evolution of HIV will be favorably influenced by such practices. This argument is unfortunately lacking support by scientific data.

The replication of HIV in any individual is a complex process that involves both viral and host factors. Very little experimental information exists on characterization of HIV strains with respect to degree of virulence and kinetics of replication. But recent work indicates that each individual is infected with a "swarm" of viruses. Thus, a single person at any one time may have both slow and fast replicating forms of the virus. During the asymptomatic period of infection (often lasting five years or more), a potent early immune response seems to be relatively effective in suppressing rapidly replicating viruses, and "slow/low" strains of HIV are dominant. As the person becomes ill and the immune system deteriorates or the virus mutates, so called "high/fast" replicating viruses are more prevalent. Other important factors that may modulate virus replication in any single individual include the genetics of that person, so-called "cofactors" (e.g., infection with herpes viruses, use of recreational drugs, nutritional status), and anti-HIV therapy.

Mr. Weiss's major hypothesis seems to be that the way the virus is transmitted will influence its virulence. Yet a slow/low strain from an asymptomatic person may emerge as a highly pathogenic virus in another person—regardless of the route of transmission. In addition, there are no data to support the claim that a less pathogenic form of HIV was converted to a more transmissible and virulent form a few decades ago as African populations migrated and changed behaviors.

Speculative arguments made without a foundation in laboratory or clinical science seem somewhat unnecessary and potentially self-defeating when used to recommend important behavioral changes. If we want the White House to hear us, we need to have our facts in order to make our case.

JEROME E. GROOPMAN, M.D.
Boston, Massachusetts

The writer is associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Lowell Weiss replies:

The model of the progression from slow/low viruses to high/fast ones does not acknowledge that the average replication rates will differ from one swarm of HIV to the next. The swarm that is transmitted from a person who is at a late disease stage is bound to be more dangerous than those strains transmitted from a person with an asymptomatic infection. This is a good explanation for the recent finding that people who had sexual intercourse with a person with AIDS had a more rapid disease progression than those who were infected with viruses from people at earlier stages of infection. But more to the point, considering the costs of treatment, interventions designed to reduce needle-borne and venereal transmission of HIV are good investments. Any evolutionary benefits would be icing on the cake.

Tunnel vision

To the editors:

Two characters from Global Vision took the occasion of your famous piece on Bill Moyers ("The Power of Myth" by Andrew Ferguson, August 19 & 26) to mug our organization in the October 7 correspondence column, accusing us of "bashing" Mr. Moyers in a public television trade paper. TNR readers interested in reading Mr. Moyers's side and ours can write to the Committee on Media Integrity, P.O. Box 2669, Hollywood, California 90078.

DAVID HOROWITZ
Hollywood, California

The writer is chairman of the Committee on Media Integrity.

Deficit thinking

To the editors:

Robert S. McIntyre's "Borrow 'n' Squander" (September 30) is a fascinating manipulation of numbers. His entire premise—that if we still had the 1970s tax rates the rich would be paying so much more in taxes today that we wouldn't have a deficit problem—rests on the assumption that the record period of economic growth in the 1980s would have happened under the old tax code. This is a highly suspect contention.

In the five years (1978-82) prior to the Reagan tax cuts taking effect, the United States experienced roughly 1 percent real growth. In the seven post-Reagan tax cut years (1983-89), economic growth was about 2.5 percent. One could easily flip Mr. McIntyre's argument and say that if we had kept intact the old tax code and economic growth rates remained at 1 percent, then even with the higher marginal rates the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans would have paid far *less* in taxes than they have. The McIntyre article simply assumes away the real heart of the fiscal policy debate: Did the tax cuts stimulate the economic

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 28, 1991

MR. THOMAS GOES A-COURTING

By the time Anita Hill's allegations against Clarence Thomas surfaced in the press, a fair or sober evaluation of them by the Senate was no longer a possibility. Two days before a semi-immutable scheduled vote, there was no way for any senator to make an impartial judgment about whether Ms. Hill was telling the truth, to evaluate how serious her charges were, or to put them in any kind of perspective. Thanks to the timing, her charge of sexual harassment was bound to become the single most important factor in the vote, overwhelming far more basic and important questions about Clarence Thomas's record, his competence, and his views on the Constitution.

This impasse was in no way the fault of Mr. Thomas, who deserves a chance to respond in public to the accusation. Nor was it the fault of Ms. Hill, whose story emerged at the eleventh hour through no choice of her own. It is the fault, primarily, of the Senate Judiciary Committee and its chairman, Joseph Biden, who didn't really want to listen. Though Mr. Biden knew of Ms. Hill's charges as early as September 12, he chose not to pursue the matter. Although initially this may have been because of Ms. Hill's reluctance to go public with her story, Mr. Biden made no effort to persuade her to testify. Nor, she says, did he call her as a witness after she changed her mind and decided she would appear before the committee, while its hearings were still taking place. Senator Biden gave his colleagues on the Judiciary Committee documents relating to the charge an hour before they voted on September 27. Throughout, his behavior was that of someone more worried about avoiding trouble than in discharging his responsibility.

It's too facile to claim, however, as Representative Pat Schroeder and others have, that Senator Biden and his colleagues did not pursue the issue solely because they are men and therefore unable to deal with issues important to women. This view, which amounts to a kind of reverse sexism, has become conventional wisdom in this debate. A news article in the October 9 *New York Times* referred casually, for example, to Congress's "white male viewpoint" as if such a thing existed. There are, of course, many men (and doubtless plenty of congressmen) who are sexist, and Congress would benefit enormously by an influx of women. But it helps no one to parade the slogans of reverse sexism (and racism) as an excuse for an argument.

Indeed, the slogans obscure the other reasons for the Senate's ineptitude. Right-wingers had threatened Mr. Biden, for example, with a reprise of the plagiarism scandal that ended his 1988 presidential bid if he dared to "bork" Mr. Thomas. Moreover, that incident left Mr. Biden with much sympathy for people who become victims of such feeding frenzies, and he was leery of an open season on sleaze. Many of his Senate colleagues shared his anxiety. Dennis DeConcini of Arizona was quick to say he found Mr. Thomas's denial more "credible" than Ms. Hill's charges. The subtext here is his own scandalous relationship with Charles Keating, which Mr. DeConcini barely survived and does not wish to have aired again.

Less scandal-ridden senators hardly behaved better. A number of Republicans, including the ill-tempered Alan Simpson and Mr. Thomas's usually even-tempered sponsor John Danforth, were quick to assert, without evidence, that Ms. Hill was lying, or was party to a cynical frame-up of the nominee. And many other Democrats seized the opportunity to slam-dunk a nomination they dislike but are too cowed to oppose on intellectual grounds. Most in the Senate simply put wetted fingers to the wind to see which way it was blowing.

There was a better way to handle all of this. When Mr. Biden first became aware of allegations, he should have telephoned Ms. Hill personally to try to evaluate whether her claims had even surface credibility. If it seemed to him, as it does to us, that they were serious

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enough to merit further investigation, Mr. Biden should have tried to convince her to testify before the Judiciary Committee. Ms. Hill could have given her version; Judge Thomas could have given his in reply. Though the affair would have certainly made a stir, there would have been time to evaluate it dispassionately. Ms. Hill's story might have been corroborated, or discredited by external evidence, or by other witnesses. Even if the hearings brought the senators no closer to a decision about who was telling the truth, looking into the allegations weeks ago would have allowed time to put the charges in perspective. Now there's no chance.

But even with the most judicious treatment, this would have been a messy, unpleasant business. Like racial discrimination, sexual harassment, which is prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, is prevalent in our society, yet lamentably hard to prove or rectify. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which Mr. Thomas headed at the time some of the alleged incidents took place, defines sexual harassment to include not merely an explicit abuse of power, such as a threat to demote someone who won't sleep with you, but behavior that "has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment."

This subjective standard, which attempts to rectify subtle, real discrimination, is nevertheless a deeply problematic one. Like the disparate impact standard in civil rights law, its concentration on the mere "effect" of behavior, rather than its intent, offends basic notions of justice. Given this expansive definition, it's not surprising that the National Organization for Women estimates that as many as 75 percent of employed women experience sex harassment on the job. It was, perhaps, only a matter of time before this amorphous legislation intersected with the fetid atmosphere of today's Washington.

To say that Clarence Thomas has been accused of something common and elusive to prove is not to deny that he has been accused of something serious. It *is* serious, serious enough to delay the vote—especially if perjury to the FBI and Senate is added to the original harassment charge. But because the charge is so explosive and hard to substantiate, it's especially important that it be judged fairly and promptly. It makes sense that the statute of limitations for sexual harassment complaints, which carry no criminal penalties, is in most cases 300 days. Ms. Hill brings her charge for the first time after more than 3,000 days. It was unfair of her to wait so long, and the fact that she did wait, and, according to press reports, only came forward after being prompted by friends and liberal interest groups, should weigh against her when the Judiciary Committee examines her evidence. As head of the EEOC, Mr. Thomas had a special obligation to avoid violating the law on sexual harassment. But what he is accused of is a failing, not a felony; if true, a disquieting mark against him, but not of itself disqualifying—one factor, not the factor. It has to be weighed with every other consideration.

We suspect that such a measured deliberation will not now take place, cannot now take place. We suspect, in fact, that Clarence Thomas is finished. Senators will be leery of supporting a man in a sexual harassment suit, for fear of controversy, and even perhaps of similar accusations being leveled against themselves. The controversy itself will perform its usual magic, by tainting the nominee, even if he is acquitted. It is a fittingly farcical end to a farcical process. The Bush administration promoted Mr. Thomas's nomination as a matter of character, not of professional qualifications; and it has reaped a bitter reward. Liberal interest groups, some of which initiated this process with a thorough search through the nominee's past for any scandal they could find, can now add another verb to "borking." To "thomas" is to cast a net wide enough and deep enough to find any allegation from someone's past and use it to affect the process of a Supreme Court nomination. It's all politics, of course. And riveting theater. But when the U.S. Senate convenes a special session to determine if a nominee discussed bestiality in a cafeteria, it's a pretty good sign that something has gone awry.

NOTEBOOK

THIS GREAT BODY: The irony of Senator Edward Kennedy's office pursuing allegations of sexual harassment against nominees to the Supreme Court has not been lost on many conservative commentators. And there is, of course, something rich about the senator's remark on the Senate floor last Tuesday: "If members of the Senate ignore Professor Hill's serious charges, if the Senate votes on this nomination without making a serious attempt to resolve this issue, the Senate will bring dishonor on this great body." But the point surely is that, in the end, Senator Kennedy chose *not* to pursue the allegations early and forcefully on the committee, no doubt in part because of his own vulnerability. His sexual excesses rendered him virtually paralyzed in dealing maturely with the subject. His failing ultimately was not so much his own sexual escapades as his refusal to be a hypocrite thoroughly enough.

BY ANY CHANCE RELATED?: We enjoyed the chart in *Newsweek*'s September 23 issue, diagramming the "Unified Scandal Theory," which connects BCCI to Iran-contra, to Jim and Tammy Bakker, to Wedtech, to Ferdinand Marcos, to Michael Milken, to Manuel Noriega, and so on. In fact, we enjoyed it almost as much as the Mark Hosenball/Michael Isikoff diagram of the "Harmonic Convergence of International Sleaze," which connected Iran-contra, Marcos, Noriega, PTL, Wedtech, insider trading, etc., and appeared in TNR's issue of April 4, 1988. Of course, any connection between the two charts may be purely coincidental and not indicative of any actual conspiracy.

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I GOT NO CLUE, BABE: West Coast Republicans have a rising star in Sonny Bono, the mayor of Palm Springs, who is contemplating a run for the Senate in 1992. "As far as free thinking," he told political columnist Bill Bradley, "I would probably be the most free thinker." Like, way to go, Sonny.

WELL, SURE BEATS DATING:

The Loneliness of the Black Conservative
Clarence Thomas
—*Policy Review*, fall 1991

ON THE HILL

UNHINGED

By Sidney Blumenthal

Even before the final whirlwind of Clarence Thomas's nomination hit the Bush presidency, other factors were wearing it down. No one had planned for this sudden erosion. George Bush had no doubt that his surprise unilateral nuclear arms cut and grounding of the Strategic Air Command would enhance his political superiority. As always, by asserting the primacy of foreign policy, his advantage would be further solidified. Thus, he said confidently: "Some will say these initiatives call for a budget windfall for domestic programs. But the peace dividend I seek is not measured in dollars . . . "

Yet, with this stroke, instead of halting attacks on the defense budget, he provoked them. Instead of quelling demands for domestic spending, he aroused them. Instead of protecting the budget agreement, which had set the status quo in concrete, he undermined it. All that was previously untouchable has now come into play—on the eve of a presidential election year.

In an instant after Bush's closing ("a more peaceful, hopeful future"), the tenuous congressional coalition that had supported his budget unhinged. Swiftly and effortlessly, the Democratic leadership began to breach the bristling political battlements of the cold war, which they discovered to be inhabited only by ghosts. Bush had inadvertently condemned the political weapons as well as the literal weapons of the long twilight struggle to rust. "There's not much more to be gained by saying you're a strong, pro-defense Democrat," Senator Jim Sasser of Tennessee, the chairman of the Budget Committee, told me. "Those who persist give the impression of being almost paranoid. They look politically anachronistic."

A whole history of fear and smear, of duck and cover since the late 1940s, is at an end with Sasser's matter-of-fact observation. Just a short while ago a statement like his would have been regarded as rash and naive, an invitation to oblivion. But Sasser is hardly one who eagerly positions himself on the margin. In the majority, he is at the center. His self-consciously unguarded remark reflects a political mind beginning to take the measure of a radically shifting scene.

As war with Saddam approached, the Democrats opted to cooperate with the president by agreeing to erect an iron curtain between domestic and defense spending; funds from one category could not be moved to the other for three years—that is, through the period of Bush's re-election campaign. In effect, the Democrats had exchanged the chance of meaningful engagement in the future for Bush's breaking of his chief campaign pledge not to raise taxes. With that implicit deal, any discussion of reordering priorities was rendered futile and abstract. In the meantime, the political imperative of national security—casting the burden of proof of hardheadedness on the Democrats—was reimposed.

But after the failed coup in Russia (though before Bush's peace speech), Bush could barely hold his ground on the defense budget. The freeze-frame was already dissolving. Senator Sam Nunn, the ultimate defense Democrat, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, still wounded by his initial opposition to the Gulf war, was seeking to regain his dominance. He field marshaled a lightning strike against Al Gore's amendment to slash Star Wars funding. But in the battle for the B-2 bomber, Nunn and the administration won a Pyrrhic victory. The leadership, represented by majority leader George Mitchell and his predecessor, Robert Byrd, opposed Nunn. Nunn's once solid base of Southern Democrats and Republicans cracked. "The White House had to pull out all the stops to even survive by a one-vote margin," said Sasser, who led the floor fight. Quayle presided all afternoon as president of the Senate, hoping for relevance as the deciding vote. "Of their 51, a number were there out of a sense of obligation [to the president] and out of protest. The floor fight in my view mortally wounded the B-2. It's now in a moribund state."

On September 23 Bush appeared before the United Nations, establishing the atmosphere for his peace speech. The collapse of communism, he said, did not mark the end of history, but its "resumption . . . revival . . . renewal." The president proclaimed nothing less than the dawning of a "new era." The realist presented himself as a utopian, disavowing his "intention of striving for a Pax Americana," and declaring his goal to be a "Pax Universalis."

The next day restiveness over the budget agreement surfaced in Congress. Representative David Obey, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, proposed an amendment that would reallocate 1 percent of the military budget, one-third for Russian food and medical aid and two-thirds for domestic public

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works and education. But the notion of violating the sanctity of the categories was still too unorthodox, and Obey's amendment was overwhelmingly rejected. A week later Obey's farouche suggestion would be considered a modest proposal.

On September 27 Bush delivered his peace speech. Though he was hailed as visionary by a host of pundits, the benefit of such warm praise immediately evaporated. The reason was the explosive reaction, given greater percussive force by his incoherence. The Soviet Union, he said, "is no longer a realistic threat." The weapons he disarmed were obsolete in any case. It was hardly an excruciating decision for the military to dispense with them, especially if they were to be sacrificed to save the rest. But in place of the withdrawal of the central concept of U.S. defense policy (the Soviet threat), Bush simply reiterated the idea of survivability (rooted in the superpower confrontation). He also spoke of the base force—the physical size of the military—as if its sheer quantitative downsizing were somehow a strategic idea. The hollowness at the core of Bush's speech was the absence of a new strategy. If he had advanced a larger aim (minimal deterrence, for example), requiring a long period for implementation, he might have credibly demanded political discipline. He might even have been able to retard the arms cuts if his endgame were clear. But his disarmament was on the ground that the Soviet threat had vanished, thus underscoring the antiquated character of many of the weapons he would not discard. They became emblems of his inertia.

Not only did Bush throw the future of large nuclear weapons programs into question, but conventional forces, which consume a far greater proportion of the defense budget, were opened to intense scrutiny too. "Mr. Bush may feel as if he were mugged on the way home from a moment in history," said Representative Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, who proceeded to mug him, referring on the floor to Bush's speech as "a point of departure" for the "defense debate we must now have."

Bush is still pushing for the weapons systems he had asked for before his speech—Star Wars, the B-2—but has suggested no rationale for them, having withdrawn the old one. His stalwartness, however, is failing to propitiate the Republican right, which feels betrayed by the turn of events. For its part, the congressional Democratic leadership across the board is calling for a fundamental rethinking of the defense budget and the budget agreement. Strife within the administration among the Defense Department (Dick Cheney), the Office of Management and Budget (Richard Darman), and the White House (John Sununu), and between the administration and the House Republicans, seems unavoidable. And the Democratic candidates for president are beginning to sense, slowly, that their room for maneuver against Bush is wider than they may have anticipated.

The politics of the 1990s is developing along lines that are a curious reverse of those of the mid- and late 1970s. Then, the Soviet threat and heavily increased U.S. defense expenditures (begun by Jimmy Carter) helped give impetus to the ascendance of the right. George Bush played a minor role in this drama during the Ford presidency, when as CIA director he backed the creation of the so-called B-Team—a group of outside conservatives who used the imprimatur of the agency to support the idea of a growing Soviet menace. What President Bush did with his peace speech had an obverse, impeccable, narrow logic. His action was designed to encourage the Soviets to slim down their forces and to enhance U.S. nuclear superiority. Bush would gain support for assistance to the Russians through the winter and, unlike Ford, claim in his campaign the prestige of a major arms treaty. He believed he was pre-empting everyone. The last thing he had intended was to unleash the furies. But, as with the Thomas nomination, a seemingly secure situation convulsed into reversal. An epoch has passed between the moment when Michael Dukakis mounted a tank and Boris Yeltsin did so. •

MANERPLAW POSTCARD

RAIN OF TERROR

By James D. Ross

The heavy rains in Manerplaw appear capable of washing away this isolated headquarters of Burma's opposition movement. Torrents of mud sweep past the bamboo and hardwood stilt structures that billet rebel fighters, resting after a week's patrol in the nearby hills. Down by the swollen Moei River, Manerplaw's only reliable line of communication to the outside world, the youngsters who captain the motorized longboats frantically bail out the rainwater with small plastic buckets.

But the rainy season provides a measure of safety for Manerplaw's defenders. Under such conditions the Burmese army, the Tatmadaw, cannot conduct major offensive operations. Well-armed and supported by air cover, the Tatmadaw has used past dry seasons to capture most of the bases held by the Democratic Alliance of Burma, a loose alliance of twenty ethnic minority and political groups opposing the Rangoon government. In March Burmese troops closed to within seven miles of Manerplaw before being forced back by the rebels. With the end of the rains nearing, Burmese troops are moving in position to resume their offensive.

Manerplaw optimistically means "victory place" in the language of the Karen, an ethnic minority that has

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fought for autonomy since Burma's independence in 1948. For fifteen years the Karen National Union (KNU) has used this area just across the Thai border as its headquarters. After Burma's military junta brutally suppressed the pro-democracy movement in 1988, the KNU opened its camp to Burmese fleeing to the border. Since then some 8,000 to 10,000 students have braved arrest and possible execution to journey to the border area; about a thousand now carry arms under the banner of the All-Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF).

Even in quiet times life in Manerplaw is hard. Locally generated electricity is sporadic. Medical facilities for the wounded and sick are inadequate. Omnipresent are the shivering and weary victims of malaria; everyone else admits to having the disease in remission. Young men with missing legs attest to the use of land mines in the contested areas.

Three recent arrivals to Manerplaw, all 18-year-old high school students, explained why they had left family and friends in Rangoon for the uncertain dangers of the hills. Each had grown up in the city and, like virtually all of their predecessors in the ABSDF, had little inkling of life in the jungle, let alone that as a guerrilla fighter. Maung Maung Naing and Myint Tun (pseudonyms) served on the eight-member executive committee of an underground student group at their high school. Their friend Ko Zaw (also a pseudonym) served as the liaison to other local opposition groups. They had been active in the pro-democracy movement since 1988, distributing anti-government leaflets and helping to organize demonstrations.

Students have been at the forefront of Burmese protest movements since British colonial days—and have paid the price for their activities. In 1962 the Tatmadaw gunned down more than 100 students who were protesting General Ne Win's overthrow of Burma's flawed but functioning parliamentary democracy. Several hundred more died in 1974 during anti-government demonstrations arising from the funeral of U.N. Secretary General U Thant. But when students peacefully took to the streets following a town/gown incident in Rangoon in March 1988, few were prepared for the systematic brutality of the Tatmadaw's response. The military set up ambushes designed not merely to disperse demonstrators, but to kill as many as possible. Bodies that could be recovered were often found to have gunshot wounds in the back, evidence of being shot while trying to flee. Incidents such as the rape of female students in custody and the suffocation of forty-one students locked in a police van transformed the student movement into a nationwide revolt, which was crushed in September 1988.

The military junta, which calls itself the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has retained a tight grip on dissent ever since. The SLORC has flouted the results of nationwide elections held in May 1990, as well as the ensuing international outcry. The opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), despite the incarceration of its charismatic leader Aung San Suu Kyi and severe restrictions on campaigning, took 80 percent of the seats in the proposed National Assembly versus 2 percent for the military-backed National Unity Party. Since then the SLORC has presented a parade of excuses justifying its continued rule, claiming, for instance, that it "cannot find any organization that can govern the country in a peaceful and stable manner."

Many of those who did not die on the streets have suffered in Burma's detention facilities and prisons, where torture is widespread. Besides the routine beatings, political detainees are commonly subjected to electric shock, burning with cigarettes, and psychological abuse. Many have been hustled before military tribunals that amount to no more than sentencing hearings and given long prison terms. By official accounts more than 100 persons have been sentenced to death. Others, numbering in the thousands, are imprisoned without charge or trial or access to counsel.

Under the circumstances, the three teenagers in Manerplaw had not fared badly. Despite being active in the student opposition for several years, none had ever been injured or arrested. But the maltreatment of companions in the SLORC's prisons was deeply felt. "The chairman of our high school group was arrested," said Maung Maung Naing. "The MI [military intelligence] beat and kicked him and punched him in the face. He was held for only one month, but his injuries were serious. Worse was the psychological shock. For a long time after his release he was too afraid to meet with his friends or talk about his experiences." Another friend had been arrested five times for his political activity. "He had a nervous breakdown the last time he was detained," said Ko Zaw, "but after his release he still took part in political activism."

However dangerous their situation in Rangoon, the three resisted the suggestion that this was why they had left. More important were new regulations on students that further restricted political activity, which the SLORC announced in anticipation of the reopening of the universities in May. "The government has made peaceful political change impossible," said Ko Zaw. "There is no freedom of speech or assembly. We don't even have the right to express sorrow for the fallen students." Myint Tun was more to the point: "The 1988 student protests were peaceful, but the government responded very brutally. We now know that we are not going to get human rights by begging for them from the SLORC."

All signs from Rangoon point to continuing repression. Influential Buddhist monk organizations have been silent since last October when the Tatmadaw stormed the Buddhist temples in Mandalay and arrested several hundred monks. Arrests of NLD party activists have continued to the point where there seem to be few people left to arrest. Recently more than fifty NLD members and several hundred others fled to Manerplaw to join the opposition government-in-exile. In September a SLORC official made it clear that the regime

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had no intention of transferring power to civilian rule: "We cannot say for how long we will be in charge of the state administration," he said over state radio. "It might be five years or ten."

Militarily, the Democratic Alliance of Burma poses no threat to the SLORC's rule. Whatever its popular support, the armed opposition controls no territory beyond the vicinity of Manerplaw and those areas tenuously held by the ethnic rebel armies elsewhere along the border. By contrast, the Tatmadaw has been strengthened considerably in the past year, primarily through the addition of arms from China and Singapore, paid for with hard currency earned from the sale of fishing and logging rights to Thai businessmen and oil exploration rights to Western oil companies. The Burmese government has also profited from the illicit sale of opium, an export largely controlled in the past by the now defunct Communist Party of Burma.

Some Burmese in exile believe that Manerplaw's student soldiers are a drain on the limited resources of the opposition movement. Funds destined for Manerplaw might be better spent on those students in exile, who, by documenting SLORC abuses and protesting in front of Burmese embassies, are seeking to generate international concern for Burma's plight. But the commitment of these three youths in malarial, rain-soaked Manerplaw to basic rights and democratic principles provides some hope for Burma's future, though that future may be distant. Asked whether his parents knew he had fled to the hills, perhaps never to return, Maung Maung Naing responded: "I didn't tell them or leave a note. It would be too dangerous. But they knew my politics—they will know where I am now."

JAMES D. ROSS is Asia program director at the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

The victims of Soviet nuclear testing.

ATOMIC LAKE

By Susan E. Reed

SEMIPALATINSK, KAZAKHSTAN

Four-year-old Zandos has the physical decrepitude of a 100-year-old man. He lives on the edge of an immense nuclear test range in northeastern Kazakhstan. His limbs are rigid, paralyzed by a neurological fault that prevents them from growing. He has never seen his mother because his eyes are covered with thick cataracts. His lips do not form words; he only grunts and drools.

His family lives in the village of Sarjal, just two miles from where the Soviets conducted at least one nuclear test per month for forty years. Inside one of the dozens of mud-walled houses, his grandmother sits on a shabby sofa cradling him. She massages his tiny hands, she lifts his back up and down, bending him at the waist to improve his circulation. There are no smiles of joy, no flutters of amusement that pass across his face. Zandos is a thirty-inch bundle of flesh wrapped up in a baby's sleeper. He will never be more than that. "It is from the *peligome*," explains his grandmother. "They experimented on us with those tests as if we were rabbits."

Peligome, the Russian word for test site, comes up repeatedly in the dozens of villages in Semipalatinsk province. Contamination from the *peligome* is what the locals believe has caused thousands of birth defects and cancer-related deaths since the first small atom bomb was dropped in 1949. "When the mushroom cloud went up, my parents went out to watch it," explains Yeerkish. Two years later she was born with dwarfism and dysplasia, a congenital malformation of the hip. At age 40, Yeerkish is three-and-a-half feet tall. She sits on a suitcase on the floor near her bed because it is the most convenient height for her bowed and misshapen legs. Movement for her is difficult. She ambles around her house, stiffly shifting her weight from one knobby knee to the other, stretching her long arms to reach the table.

Until two years ago, it was forbidden by the Soviet government even to speak of what was going on at the test range. Scientists were prohibited from publicly monitoring radiation levels or studying the health effects of the testing. The region was closed to outsiders, Soviets as well as foreigners. The KGB was ready to point the finger at anyone who might release "state secrets."

But the Soviet government knew the effects of the radiation. In 1957 it established a secret institute in the city of Semipalatinsk known as Clinic No. 4. Four doctors in this clinic monitored the reactions of a control group of 6,000 people who lived in the area. But the doctors did not treat them. If these people died of cancer, the doctors were prohibited from publicly acknowledging the disease or its cause. In a report to the Kurchatov Atomic Energy Institute that was based on declassified documents, the current head of the clinic, B.I. Gusev, wrote: "The first atomic explosion (1949) was a real catastrophe. The radiation effects on the population from that explosion were no different from the radiation on residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the first few hours after local radioactive fallout occurred, the strength of the doses in the immediate locality [the village of Dolon] was 200 roentgens per hour." The maximum allowable dose is considered to be 20 microroentgens.

There were 200 above-ground tests at the site in fourteen years. The report goes on to say, "Subsequent explosions conducted dozens of times a year from 1951 through 1963 led to the contamination of Semipalatinsk province with fission products and the exposure of the population to ionizing radiation in various dose ranges." Nearly 500,000 people were exposed to radia-

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tion. Most of the secret documents are still locked up inside the USSR's Ministry of Public Health. The man in charge of the military wing of the health ministry is Lieutenant General Zelentsov, who told a Japanese television network last year, "During the period of testing at the Semipalatinsk proving ground, there may have been several cases of radiation sickness, but no one died!"

Since the testing stopped in 1989, there has been a surge of independent research by Kazakh doctors based on health records in the towns surrounding the test range. They reveal an astonishingly high rate of cancer. Cases of leukemia increased 70 percent between 1955 and 1960. Cancer of the esophagus is seven times more prevalent near the site; lung and liver cancer rates are three times higher than in other areas of Kazakhstan.

Emboldened by the end of communism, Dr. Kuvanish Tuzebayev, a doctor in Sarjal, acts as a guide to the hidden horrors of the cold war. From his desk drawer he brings out the list of villagers who have died from cancer. Premature death from cancer is 50 percent higher in the Semipalatinsk area than it is in the rest of Kazakhstan. All the children in the village, he says, suffer from a thyroid deficiency that weakens their immune systems.

He takes me from house to house introducing debilitated human beings, here a case of dwarfism, there a case of cretinism, in which severe retardation is caused by the lack of a thyroid hormone. Their parents, he points out, have no prior history of these diseases. Cerebral palsy, paralysis caused by a brain defect, is the most common affliction. About 27 percent of cases are caused by brain damage during delivery or low birthweight, and some cases have been traced to trauma while the fetus was in the womb. But the majority of cases are caused by unknown factors.

Iskakova Zyloyz has to give constant care to her 7-year-old son Askhot, who is afflicted with cerebral palsy and cannot walk or speak. He crawls across the wooden floor pulling his body along with his hands. The only makeshift chair he can reach by himself is the lower hutch of a wooden cabinet. "We need medical help, but [the Soviet government] doesn't care about his health at all," she says.

Rural communities in the Soviet Union are notoriously impoverished and underdeveloped. It is not unusual to find people living without indoor plumbing or electricity. But the dozen villages surrounding the test ground suffer from exceptionally harsh living conditions. The people live in whitewashed mud and straw huts. There are no paved roads in the villages. Cattle, horses, and dogs roam freely. Some villagers have small vegetable gardens, but most live on goat's milk, meat, and grain. Sarjal's hospital is little more than a house with beds. There is no indoor plumbing. Dr. Tuzebayev has no diagnostic equipment other than a stethoscope, and he gets only one-quarter of the medicine he requests every month. "They wanted to do the tests in a place where people didn't live well," he says. "They found this place and they treated us like a second-class nation."

The Soviet government never warned residents of radiation contamination. Dr. Aitkazy Tulakbayev, who practices in the village of Zneimenska, says, "The military would come and say, 'There will be an explosion at 12:30, and suggest we take the children out of school and go into the countryside. But they never talked about damage to our health or the health of our children. They were more concerned about the blasts hurting the buildings. They offered to compensate us if cracks developed in the walls of our houses." To this day the government has not posted water and soil contamination levels. The villages live on well water; the dust from the countryside blows constantly across the plains.

Public pressure during glasnost forced the government to suspend testing in 1989. The Nevada-Semipalatinsk Movement, an activist group with American and Soviet members, has been vigilant about trying to get access to secret files and has begun documenting illnesses in the area. Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of Kazakhstan, seized the opportunity of the failed coup to sign a ban on testing with Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev. The next issue will be how the Soviet government will seek to repair the damage done to the people.

The land here has always been barren, with few trees to break up the monotonous grasslands. Kazakhs roamed these plains for centuries before they were annexed by Stalin in 1920. Now they have a large lake in the Semipalatinsk province, formed by the dropping of the first atom bomb. The locals call it "atomic lake."

SUSAN E. REED is a producer for CBS News, based in London.

The nuclear proliferation boom.

BOMBS AWAY

By Patrick Glynn

After several weeks of exhausting travel and tense confrontations with Iraqi authorities, U.N. inspectors have at last succeeded in laying bare Iraq's massive effort to evade the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. On the basis of preliminary reports, the Iraqi effort appears breathtaking, clearly the largest circumvention of arms limitation provisions since Germany's violations of the Treaty of Versailles. Not that the world was unaware of Saddam Hussein's ambitions to attain the Bomb. Numerous warning signs during the 1980s—attempts by Iraqis to obtain illicit plutonium, materials for enrichment centrifuges, and even high-quality capacitors for triggering a nuclear

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weapon—had made Iraqi intentions clear. The question was how long it would take them to succeed. Before the Gulf war the U.S. intelligence community set the estimate at a reassuring five to ten years. Now that figure has been revised down to two. In short, the Gulf crisis may have been a closer shave than anyone imagined; had Saddam attacked later, or had the war for any reason been postponed, the West could well have faced a nuclear-armed Iraq.

How did Iraq, a signatory of the 1968 Nonproliferation Treaty, manage to get so close to a bomb while ostensibly remaining under the treaty's "safeguards"? The question is important because Iraq's success in evading the treaty raises the possibility of other states doing the same. And strengthening the "safeguards" administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—in particular, a new suggestion for "special inspections" of suspected nuclear sites—won't likely solve the problem.

U.N. inspections of Iraq have dramatically exposed the inherent weaknesses of the IAEA system. Most obvious, inspections conducted by the Vienna-based international body charged with policing the Nonproliferation Treaty apply only to "declared" facilities involving special nuclear materials. Most, though not all, of Iraq's massive illicit bomb effort took place either at facilities outside the IAEA's legal jurisdiction or at potentially illegal, undeclared sites.

Production of an atom bomb involves the mating of two major activities, both of which, in Iraq's case, were far advanced. The first consists of the design and creation of a complicated detonation device, using conventional explosive—an activity not necessarily involving special nuclear materials and therefore not under IAEA jurisdiction. The Iraqis had undertaken a major effort to build such a detonation device at a facility known as al-Atheer, forty miles south of Baghdad. Unsuspected as the heart of the Iraqi bomb program, al-Atheer was only slightly damaged by allied bombing. Estimates vary of the success of the al-Atheer scientists in achieving a detonation design, though David Kay, head of the U.N. inspection team, has said Iraq achieved a "workable solution"—i.e., a basically practicable design on paper. The second activity needed to build a bomb is the production of enough weapons-grade or fissile material. This is what IAEA safeguards are specifically designed to prevent, and it's here that the system most clearly failed. The Iraqi effort to get fissile material involved a variety of facilities. The role of some of them in the bomb program was not understood. Others escaped detection and destruction entirely.

There are two alternative fuels for a bomb: plutonium, which is produced as a normal byproduct of "peaceful" reactor operation but which must be separated out by a chemical process (known as "reprocessing"); and enriched uranium, which is produced not by reactors but by costly, capital-intensive, and extremely time-consuming separation processes (known as "enrichment"). Back in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Iraqis sought to go the plutonium route. Then, after Israel bombed Iraq's Osirac reactor in 1981, Saddam's scientists turned clandestinely to enrichment—undertaken on a scale and with a method wholly unsuspected by nonproliferation experts.

Israel's decision to bomb the Osirac reactor is looking wiser by the day. In 1976 France sold Iraq a very large light-water research reactor to be constructed outside Baghdad. From a nonproliferation standpoint, the French-designed reactor posed two serious problems. First, it employed as its fuel highly enriched uranium—i.e., bomb-grade material. Second, as a big reactor it was capable of irradiating uranium to produce usable quantities of plutonium. In other words, operating such a reactor would by necessity have put large quantities of potentially weapons-grade materials in Iraqi hands.

At the time, the international community intended to rely on IAEA safeguards. As the Osirac reactor prepared to go on line, the IAEA readied an especially stringent regime. But that regime still probably wouldn't have stopped the Iraqis from getting a bomb. One major worry during the recent war, for example, was that the 27.5 pounds, or 12.5 kilograms, of highly enriched uranium that Iraq had purchased from France—technically under IAEA "safeguards"—would suddenly be diverted to use in a bomb. Imagine the headache with even larger reserves of fuel. The problem is that big reactors from which fuel can easily be removed are inherently not "safeguardable."

Set back by the Israeli attack and subsequently slowed by the war with Iran, the Iraqi nuclear program accelerated again in the late 1980s. Then the Iraqis turned mainly to enrichment to obtain fuel. Even before the recent Gulf war, it was known that Iraq had begun to procure materials—in particular high-quality miraging steel—to build uranium enrichment centrifuges. Nonetheless, a factory for assembling such centrifuges at Furat escaped detection and bombing during the war. Since the war, U.N. inspectors have uncovered another vast effort to enrich uranium using a process thought to be obsolete. This process, involving huge electromagnetic installations called "calutrons," was last known to be used during the Manhattan Project. U.N. inspectors discovered the remains of a massive calutron facility at Tarmiya and another pilot project at Tuwaitha. Targeted by allied bombers as a generally "suspicious facility," in the words of one official, the role of the massive Tarmiya installation, whether in the missile or nuclear program, wasn't understood. According to a State Department official, the discovery of the "incredibly inefficient" calutrons for enriching uranium came as a "big surprise." The calutron installations were part of a vast network of sites—many hardened, others shielded so as to avoid detection, some built as dummies—that made up Saddam's bomb program. The Iraqis also managed to produce three grams of plutonium—the one clear-cut violation but, because of the small quantities involved, militarily the least significant one.

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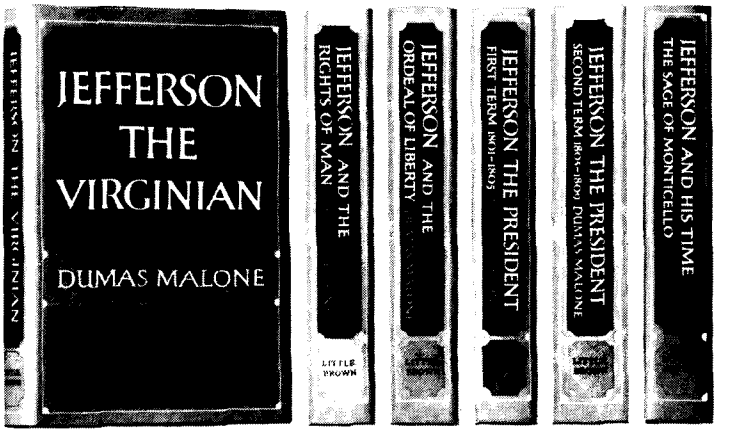

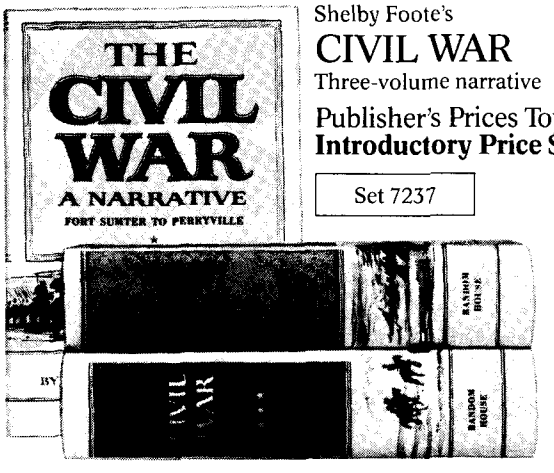

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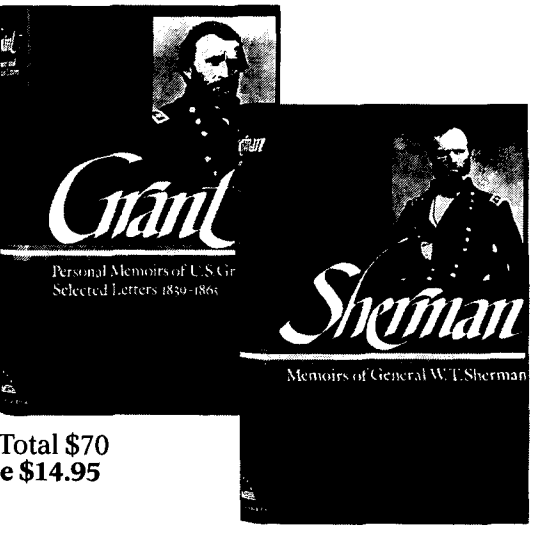

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In response to the Iraqi revelations, IAEA director Hans Blix has proposed requests for "special inspections" of suspect nuclear sites in member countries. Blix has called on intelligence agencies to share information and has asked for U.N. Security Council backing for IAEA requests. But the plan has several major snags. First, it needs approval of the IAEA's General Board, which may make inspection requests contingent on prior board approval. This could undercut any element of surprise and make the inspections meaningless. The present board includes not only proliferators such as India and Pakistan, but Cuba, Vietnam, and Iran. Second, such inspections will depend heavily on human intelligence, which, as Iraq showed, is usually in shortest supply where it is needed most. Even in the case of postwar Iraq, much of what we now know would not have been discovered without the help of a defector.

Does this mean we may face a widening proliferation threat? Probably. "If we didn't know Iraq had huge calutrons, then we don't know anything for sure," says Kathleen Bailey, former assistant director for nonproliferation at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "There are lots of places I worry about—Iran, Libya, Egypt, Syria." One imminent threat, North Korea, has signed the Nonproliferation Treaty but deliberately delayed agreeing to "full-scope" safeguards and could have the bomb in as little as two to three years, according to a State Department official. India and Pakistan are assumed to have nuclear weapons, and everyone's now edgy about Algeria, which until recently was not even on the radar screen.

There's also concern about our allies. Israel has pursued a nuclear program largely out of concern that the Nonproliferation Treaty could not prevent the spread of mass-destruction weapons in its region—a well-founded fear, as events have shown. South Korea was persuaded to abandon its quest for the bomb in the late 1970s in exchange for extension of U.S. nuclear guarantees. But with the North Korean program proceeding apace and U.S. land- and sea-based tactical nuclear weapons scheduled for withdrawal under President Bush's recent disarmament initiative, South Koreans could conceivably re-evaluate. An atom bomb on the Korean peninsula, meanwhile, would likely put corresponding pressure on Japan.

Nonproliferation advocates frequently stress the virtues of disarmament by example. But not only is the U.S. moral example unlikely to inspire such leaders as Saddam Hussein to corresponding action, but retraction of American military power, including nuclear power, leaves U.S. allies exposed, widening the incentives to proliferate.

The solution? Most nonproliferation experts recommend a far greater strengthening of inspection powers than the IAEA is currently contemplating. Anthony Cordesman, aide to Senator John McCain, argues that radically more intrusive inspection—even surpassing the kind of inspection contemplated under the superpower START treaty—is essential not just in nuclear but in chemical and biological proliferation, where no safeguards exist at all. "You need rapid response. That means, in many cases, helicopters," notes Cordesman. That is the logical solution to the problem, but it's hardly politically feasible.

Short of sporadic Osirac-style bombings around the world, we're left with few options. One is to keep enough military power both to protect allies from countries seeking nuclear weapons and to discourage allies' proliferation. We also need limited missile defenses to protect U.S. troops in the field and the American homeland from those less rational regimes that may be inherently undeterrable. It's indeed hard to miss the irony that at the very moment when the nuclear threat is diminishing from what used to be the Soviet Union, mass-destruction weapons are spreading everywhere else. The cold war may have ended, but the era of proliferation is only beginning.

PATRICK GLYNN is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, people person.

THE OPPOSITIONIST

By Amy Wilentz

In early October, basking in the glow of a worldwide call for his reinstatement, Haiti's deposed president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, seemed certain of his eventual return. His suite in Washington's Madison Hotel, down the hall from the suite where Prince Saud was ensconced, was bustling with phone calls from international organizations, Western officials, and American media heavies. The militant priest-turned-president, who was elected by 67 percent of the vote in December 1990, had become a democratic cause célèbre. George Bush called for Aristide's quick reinstatement, and James Baker told the OAS in an unprecedented emergency meeting that the military coup of September 30 had "no future."

It was not always thus. Indeed, not so long ago such official U.S. lobbying on Aristide's behalf would have been unthinkable. As the leftist priest began attracting broad popular support in Haiti during the post-Duvalier era, he became a bête noire of the U.S. Embassy, figuring in its cables as a "radical firebrand" whose goal was to stir the masses to violent revolution. As a Salesian priest in a slum neighborhood, Aristide had inveighed against the Haitian economic elite, the cor-

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ruption of the political class, military might and military drug trafficking, as well as against Haiti's entrenched and archconservative Roman Catholic hierarchy. In return, he was excoriated by the business sector, disdained but feared by the politicians, physically attacked by the military, and banished from his religious order on the advice of the Haitian bishops' conference. As far as Haiti's elite is concerned, except for certain liberal bourgeois families and the small, leftist remnants of the post-Duvalier intellectual elite, the man is a pariah.

The Bush administration's words of support for Aristide after his overthrow were therefore surprising, but as the postcoup days wore on, American opinion and policy began to swing away from enthusiastic backing for Aristide. There was a swift reversion to type. Into the press seeped quotes from Western diplomats and Haitian business and political leaders charging Aristide with greater and lesser sins: with training a paramilitary Praetorian guard reminiscent of the Duvalier dynasty's Tontons Macoutes, with refusing to work with the legislature, and worst of all, with condoning mob violence. Each of these allegations contains some germ of truth.

JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Swiss police experts hired by Aristide's government had gone into Haiti the week before the coup to train an elite armed unit. According to a source in Aristide's interior ministry, this unit was to be a precursor of a new, professional Haitian police force, which under the 1987 constitution must be hierarchically and institutionally separate from the army. Such an elite force, under civilian control (as mandated by the constitution), would make any military hierarchy nervous, especially in light of a history in which presidents have traditionally created their own paramilitary force to counterbalance the armed might—and therefore the coup potential—of the independent military. Of course, events of the last two weeks show that Aristide would have been naive not to counter the Haitian military in some way. In any case, to equate this small unit with the Tontons Macoute—an untrained militia numbering in the thousands, loyal only to the president and culled from Haiti's criminal element—is at best historically inaccurate.

Charges that the president showed contempt for the legislature carry greater weight. Certainly Aristide was dismissive of the Chambre des Députés and the Senate. Perhaps he had not noticed that the rules of the game had changed in Haiti. A new constitution, overwhelmingly approved by the Haitian voters in 1987, severely curbs the powers of the executive and enhances those of the legislature and prime minister in order to avert a return to Duvalierist-style presidential rule. But in the elections of 1990, Aristide, an anti-Duvalierist, was voted into the presidency, and the legislature, with its smaller, unmonitored elections, became the roosting place of a handful of Duvalierists, military puppets, discontented radicals, and presidential candidates manqués. Thus the liberal and worthy 1987 constitution, like so many of the legally barren constitutions that preceded it, ended up reinforcing the Duvalierists, at least momentarily.

Although Aristide was elected by a landslide, no political party gained a majority in the legislature. According to the constitution, the president is free to name a prime minister from any party, with the consultation of the legislative leadership. Constitutionally, that nominee must then be ratified by the legislature. Aristide did name his own prime minister, René Préval, a baker by trade. But in violation of the constitution, Préval's name was never submitted to the legislature because Aristide knew he would not be confirmed.

Aristide, who grew up under Duvalierism and has not had many political models worth following, was only slowly learning to accept the advice and consent of the legislative branch. His inclination, like that of popular politicians elsewhere, would be to use his enormous sway with the people to rule alone and uninhibited. But he also knew that given Haiti's recent history, such a

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presidential style was neither acceptable nor desirable. So he made at least a show of working with the legislature; a few weeks before he was overthrown, he finally did go before them with Préval and a bouquet of flowers as a peace offering. In return, the legislators granted the prime minister, and by extension the Aristide government, a six-month grace period before further review, thus prolonging the stalemate.

The most troubling allegation against Aristide is that he condoned mob violence. In fact, he has been unforgivably slow in condemning street justice, most famously the practice of necklacing, or Père Lebrun, as the fiery collar is called in Haiti. (Père Lebrun is a local Port-au-Prince tire dealership whose advertisements feature a smiling man with a tire encircling his head like a halo.) After an abortive coup against Aristide's government-elect last January, his supporters poured into the streets and attacked various symbols of the Haitian establishment. A number of coup sympathizers and perceived enemies of Aristide were necklaced. Since then each time the army has seemed a threat, Aristide has given a speech that has seemed implicitly to condone the practice.

One report in recent U.S. news stories quotes Aristide, in a speech given two days before the coup, supposedly referring to Père Lebrun: "What a beautiful tool. What a beautiful instrument, what a beautiful device. It smells good and everywhere you go you want to breathe it." None of the foreign reporters who have mentioned the speech actually heard it being given, nor do they speak Creole. And though it is not inconsistent with other utterances of Aristide, it is entirely possible that, as in the past, he is being mistranslated. In 1987 Aristide gave a similar speech, suggesting that people continue to mount barricades of burning tires. In that context, he spoke of "little red fires" and said, "Let us turn the streets red." American Embassy officials mistranslated this and said that Aristide was asking the people to make the streets "run red with blood."

In an interview two days after he was forced into exile, Aristide appeared to distance himself from the necklace. "Look at Haiti," he said. "Even under my administration, the structures of criminal justice were shaky; under previous regimes, they did not exist. When I look at Père Lebrun, I do not see the symbol so much of violence as I do of a lack of justice. The people use what is available in order to mete out a rough justice. Otherwise, they feel, certain criminals will never be punished. That has been their experience. Père Lebrun is horrible. But I do understand it. In Haiti we were trying to establish structures of justice to meet the people's needs. But because of corruption at every level of the criminal justice system, we could not go quickly enough." A week and a half into the coup, Aristide issued a statement explicitly condemning both "Père Lebrun and repressive violence."

Part of Aristide's problem as president has been that he had continued to behave as though he were just a liberation priest. "I see myself as a president in opposition," he said during the last weeks of his administration (nothing could be truer now). He tends to identify himself with the Haitian people even as he leads them. And an overwhelming segment of the Haitian population—at least in Port-au-Prince—sees nothing wrong with Père Lebrun. Prim matrons and tough street kids and market ladies and cobblers all tell you that unless this or that notorious torturer is lynched, they cannot be sure that the fellow, no matter how much evidence there is against him, will be found guilty. If he is found guilty, they will tell you, there is no certainty that he will remain in prison. Their analysis is founded on long experience: the leaders of this coup d'état, for example, have reportedly released a large number of former Tontons Macoutes and police and military officers who were tried and imprisoned under Aristide for human rights violations.

Aristide has obvious flaws as president, those of a populist with no previous experience of democracy. There are, however, many things that can be said in his favor. During his seven months as president there was more calm on the streets of Port-au-Prince than there had been since before Jean-Claude Duvalier fell in February 1986. Citizens walked through town at night without fear; there was more traffic and small business activity than there had been in years. Bodies did not litter the streets at dawn. Soldiers were not allowed to attack civilians with impunity. A month before the coup, the midnight barbershops of Port-au-Prince were open for business for the first time in recent memory. Aristide was weeding out no-show state employees and closing down whole agencies that functioned as mere patronage providers. For the average Haitian, the quality of life had improved.

He is also the first Haitian president to represent Haiti's poor, discarded majority: the people who elected him. On inauguration day he invited the poor to the National Palace to celebrate with him, in an unprecedented symbolic gesture. Street kids in rags were allowed onto the palace grounds for the first time in Haitian history. Every Friday Haitians with grievances went to the gates of the palace, where Aristide received them personally. He spoke Creole, which they understand. The illiterate poor constitute some 90 percent of the population. Today they are the ones fleeing their squalid shanties for the countryside in hopes of escaping the wrath of the military. In one postcoup incident, at least thirty people, many of them Aristide supporters, were massacred by soldiers in an outlying shantytown called Lamentin.

In the month before he was overthrown, Aristide was also beginning to reach out to a wider section of Haitian society than his habitual constituency. Although he continued to listen to the popular organizations that had backed his campaign, he also appointed certain well-known opposition leaders to high positions on impor-

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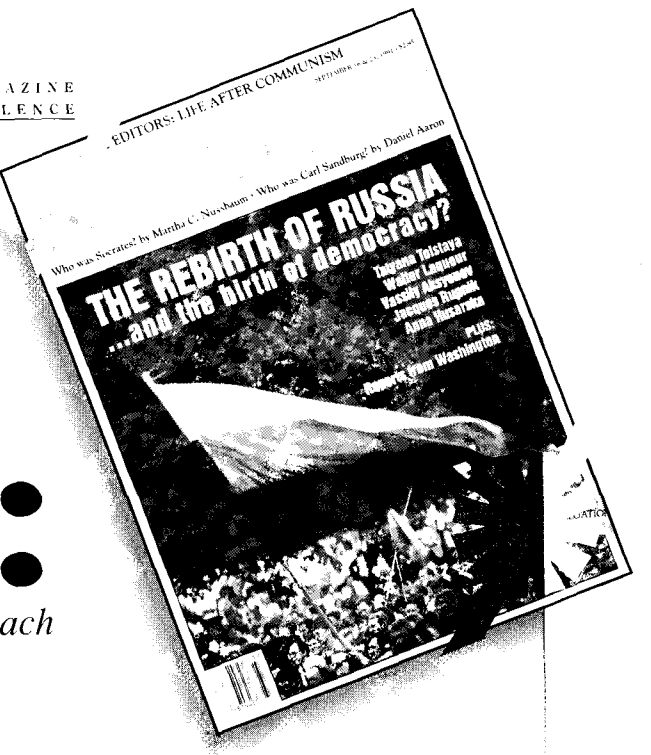

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tant government committees, including a human rights committee that was to investigate abuses under the Duvaliers and the subsequent regimes. He had agreed in principle to an International Monetary Fund plan for Haiti. He had initiated private talks with some of Haiti's foremost business leaders.

In the best light possible, this coup, followed by Aristide's reinstatement, might have corrected a mild excess of power on the executive side. For 200 years the elite ruled without consulting the people. For seven months under Aristide, popular organizations, along with the president, tried to lock the elite out of the picture. There is a Haitian proverb applicable to this situation (for every situation under the sun, there is a Haitian proverb): "*Youn sèl dwet pa mange calalou.*" It means "You need more than one finger to eat the soup." In other words, to enjoy the fruits of democracy, all Haiti must cooperate in the country's future.

Unfortunately, this now looks unlikely. Despite the efforts of the Organization of American States, the prospects for Aristide's return look slim, and the legislature has not shown much interest in pursuing the democratic rule of law. It quickly dumped Prime Minister Préval in Aristide's absence, and under ostensible pressure from troops named an interim president, the first step down the old road to calling military-run elections. The United States, meanwhile, has put a lot of space between itself and Aristide.

The military is obviously no solution. The Haitian army has not renounced violence. During this coup the military's unconcern for constitutional norms and its vicious and repeated attacks on Port-au-Prince's slum populations have amply demonstrated its bankruptcy as a social institution. It has threatened an already willing legislature. It has singled out for cruel beatings certain political figures, notably Evans Paul, the mayor of Port-au-Prince, a longtime activist and a thorn in the left side of the Aristide government. During not only the past two weeks but for the five post-Duvalier years preceding them, the Haitian military has shown itself unworthy of any democratic responsibility.

"*Jistis, se kabouet bèf,*" goes another Haitian saying. Justice is slow and unwavering, like an oxcart. The endlessly optimistic Haitian people believe that although today their president is in exile, although today the Haitian military fires upon the people and the legislature, and although today the army has refused to allow Haitian political leaders to travel to Venezuela to negotiate with Aristide under OAS supervision, someday the political situation will right itself. After a 200-year wait, surely the Haitians have earned the right to be governed by the man they elected. It is unlikely that in any future election they would come out to vote for anyone else. One thing is certain: it is hard to imagine what Haitian democracy will look like after this coup.

AMY WILENTZ is the author of *The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier* (Simon and Schuster).

Why Soviet science collapsed.

THE EXPERIMENT THAT FAILED

By Robert Wright

Alexander Oksman, who immigrated to America from the Soviet Union two years ago, refers to Saran Wrap as "wonderful type of plastic sheets." The fact that Americans can walk into a supermarket and casually buy a box of the stuff—or of Kleenex or toothpicks—fills him with awe. "It is wonderful thing," he says. "In the United States people can use many disposable things."

Oksman speaks not as a long-suffering Soviet consumer, but as a long-suffering Soviet scientist. To him Kleenex isn't just Kleenex; it's "sterile tissue paper," a valuable laboratory tool. And toothpicks help him seed microbes. For want of regular access to such items—not to mention reliably pure chemicals and the sort of modern lab machinery that now surrounds Oksman at the Albert Einstein Medical College—the life of the Soviet scientist is wearying. Oksman remembers how researchers at Leningrad's Institute of Cytology, an arm of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, were stymied by the absence of aluminum foil until finally the problem "was solved on the level of two ministries."

Joseph Kaps, an immigrant physicist now at Brookhaven National Laboratory, recalls how his Soviet colleagues used to angle for standard lab equipment, such as oscilloscopes, on which military research centers got first dibs. "You will go to these colonels and you will talk to them and you will buy them vodka and you will take them to the restaurant and you will do all the diplomacy and psychological approach," he says. Don't get the idea that this is some kind of bribe; the

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vodka is just a "necessary condition" for clear communication and social bonding. "It's not just giving him vodka like giving him $200.... There is a whole ritual.... You should talk about life. You should talk about his problems. You should talk about your problems. You should talk about the country's problems. You should talk about the universe." Then at some point the conversation should turn to oscilloscopes.

There is nothing new about these sorts of stories. Long before the conspicuous economic decay of the late 1980s, most Soviet research was conducted under conditions that Western scientists—and Western undergraduates—would find primitive. The poverty was partly hidden by impressive technological feats in space and weaponry. But often what turned out to be most impressive, on close inspection, wasn't the high technology but how much was done with low technology. In the early 1970s, when a MiG pilot defected, Western analysts were surprised to find that his air-to-ground radio used not transistors but vacuum tubes. And when Apollo astronauts docked with a Soyuz spacecraft in 1975, it was a little like sitting in a Hyatt Regency suite and peering down into a nearby Motel 6. Soviet feats in space and weaponry did involve technical prowess, but they depended equally on unflinching political will, as resources were massively, and wastefully, diverted from acute social needs to a huge research sector.

In a sense, the system worked. Nuclear weapons kept the rest of the world scared. And Sputnik gave the Soviet people reason to place at least some credence in the endless official promises of a coming millennium, in which socialism and science would meld into what has been called a "technotopia."

Well, that was then. Ever since the beginning of perestroika, and especially now, in the post-putsch era, Soviet leaders have wanted their scientists and engineers to be not so much keepers of the arsenal as engines of economic progress. They're asking them to be like Western scientists and engineers, and develop things people can actually use. And they're asking them to do it without Saran Wrap.

So far success has not been rampant. A few months ago *The New York Times* published a map of the world in which each nation's size reflected its technological status, as measured by its share of leading patents. The United States was the biggest country in the world—bigger than the Soviet Union is in real life. Japan easily held second place, stretching from the top of the globe to the bottom. Much smaller but still formidable were Germany, Great Britain, and France. If you looked closely, you could see the USSR. It was a tiny island off the coast of Japan—less than one half of one percent of the size of the United States. It had secured the No. 13 spot by nosing out Belgium and Panama.

The story of how Soviet science and technology attained this level of commercial irrelevance mirrors the general decline of the Soviet economy. In both cases Stalinism took a steady toll for decades; and in both cases perestroika failed (to put it mildly) to set things right, thanks to a certain cluelessness among Soviet leaders as to the simple secrets of Western dynamism.

What happens with Soviet science and technology over the next year could heavily influence the economic fate of the Union (or, perhaps, of individual republics within what is for now called the Soviet Union). The USSR has a very large pool of scientific and engineering talent—grossly underprivileged talent, systematically frustrated talent, but talent nonetheless. This pool may be the largest unexploited Soviet resource, and, what's more, the most rapidly exploitable; liberating the nation's research base won't be a simple matter, but it's simpler than the convoluted task of liberating the whole economy. So the Soviet Union's place on that patent map could grow markedly within a couple of years, ushering in broader economic growth. I'm not betting on it, but it's possible, which is at least as much as you can say for most other rosy Soviet scenarios these days.

There has always been a certain tension between science and Soviet-style communism. Sentencing an astronomer to ten years in prison for insisting that Newton was a great thinker—Engels had believed otherwise—does not foster a spirit of untrammeled inquiry. (The offender, Nikolay Kozyrev, was caught up in a Stalin-era purge that decimated the staff of the USSR's oldest observatory.) Within biology, revealed truth proved more widely devastating. In the late 1940s Stalin, underscoring Trofim Lysenko's denunciation of Mendelian genetics, sanctioned the imprisonment of various prominent geneticists, who then demonstrated a tendency to die after reaching prison. In the spring of 1953, as James Watson and Francis Crick were uncovering the structure of DNA, Lysenko was at the height of his power, still insisting that the conceptual context of their work was a capitalist delusion.

In the wake of Stalin's various intrusions, Soviet science stubbornly continued to attract good and independent thinkers. (Where else was an honest intellectual to go—into economic theory or political philosophy?) And though scientists had to put up with the usual surveillance, and sporadic repression, large clusters of them carved out realms of relative autonomy, in which Party membership wasn't the norm, and a low-decibel cynicism prevailed. Each spring, when supervisors around Moscow rallied their workers for the May Day parade, it was in the institutes of the Academy of Sciences that summoning a hearty turnout was hardest.

The unspoken agreement was this: the scientists would spend their time studying problems most relevant to the construction of awe-inspiring things, often without access to the latest scientific technology. The authorities, in return, tolerated an unusual amount of independence and ladled adoration on scientists by fostering a "cult of science" and selectively dishing out perks.

It wasn't just Mikhail Gorbachev's urgent call for salable technology that rendered this system untenable. The ongoing decay of the USSR's scientific standing was sure to quicken in the absence of major change. Fuel-

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ing this atrophy was a historical process that, though not Hegelian, is inexorable and, in a sense, dialectical.

Part I of the dialectic is the increasingly short lag between scientific insight and technological application. (This is what, in the West, has turned professors into moonlighting capitalists and raised tough questions about the commercial role of the university.) Part II is the growing tendency of science itself to depend on the latest technology. Put Parts I and II together and you get a self-feeding cycle. Good science yields good tools that further enrich science, which means better tools, and so on. Or, instead: bad science yields few such tools, and this further retards science, etc.

In the West the catalyst in this cycle is capitalism. It feverishly translates science into technology, including technology for science. Leaf through *Science* or *Nature*, and you'll see full-page ads for the likes of LabVision ("a better way of working with molecules") and Stratagene (which dares you to "take the Pyrococcus challenge"). These journals look to Soviet scientists the way the Sears Christmas catalog looks to a child in Appalachia.

If you examine the ads, you'll note that many of the products are information processors. They're computers, or software packages, or machines with computational components. This fact gives even deadlier force to the non-Hegelian dialectic.

Much has been written about how the microchip doomed Stalinism. Orwell, we've learned, was wrong. Information technology would not be primarily a tool of centralized political control; nor would it, as Soviet cybernetics enthusiasts proclaimed in the 1960s, be the salvation of a command economy, with a few giant electronic brains precisely calibrating production to societal needs. On the contrary: a nation's economic vigor would depend on the widespread diffusion of dinky electronic brains, which in turn would make it practically impossible for authorities to control the flow of political information. So the trade-off between totalitarianism and material progress would grow starker.

Less commonly noted is that scientific progress, like economic efficiency, has come to depend on the broad diffusion of microprocessors. Not only do computers now figure in the analysis of experiments in molecular biology, chemistry, and so on. In fields such as physics and aerospace engineering, the computer sometimes *is* the experiment. It's a modeling medium so powerful as to either displace old-fashioned experiments (costly wind tunnels, say) or allow the simulation of systems that are themselves beyond practical experimental manipulation (the nascent universe, nuclear explosions).

Pity the nation that confronts the computational era of science in the position of the Soviet Union as of the mid-1980s: obsessed with the centralized control of information (Xerox machines were locked up at night) and, anyway, technologically inept; as of 1984 the Agate, a shoddy Apple II clone, was rolling off Soviet assembly lines at a pace of dozens per year.

Today things are a bit better. Soviet factories can make bad clones of obsolescing personal computers faster—at nearly half the pace of Western factories. And the West has decided to let the Soviet Union import more powerful computers—386 and 486 PCs—without limit. But these remain immensely expensive by Soviet standards, as do microchip-based lab tools. And the latest supercomputers are still off-limits. Computing remains the "Achilles' heel of Soviet science," as Harley Balzer of Georgetown University notes in *Soviet Science on the Edge of Reform* (Westview).

Notwithstanding all of the above, there are two sources of hope for the research base of the Soviet Union. One is that Soviet science was never so isolated as to feel the full force of the non-Hegelian dialectic. Soviet scientists seldom got to rub elbows with Western colleagues, but they read their papers. And, by hook or by crook, Western technology, or at least crude imitations of it, often reached the most elite laboratories. (The Soviet tradition of making bad clones of good computers goes back decades—to the IBM 360 mainframe and DEC's DPD minicomputers.) Soviet scientists were usually up on the latest ideas, even if the prospect of producing such ideas was becoming dimmer. They still are.

Of course, some of the richest talent is in fields not dependent on the latest lab equipment, such as mathematics and theoretical physics. Unfortunately, these are also pursuits that rarely have short-term commercial payoffs. Still, the two long-standing Soviet research preoccupations—space and weapons—do cut across fields of practical import: materials science (metallurgy, advanced ceramics, etc.), nuclear fission and fusion, lasers, and so on. Computer science, nourished by the Soviet educational emphasis on math but confined by crude hardware, is rife with languishing talent. Even molecular biology, an area of notorious underprivilege, contains enough brainpower to get recruiting attention from world-class labs like Cold Spring Harbor. And, especially in the Ukraine, biotechnology is heavily studied in the form of agricultural science. (Which isn't, incidentally, to blame for the state of Soviet agriculture. A recently invented biochemical weapon against the potato beetle went undeveloped because Soviet farmers don't need it; they never manage to harvest all the crop before rot sets in, so what's the use of boosting the crop?)

The second source of hope for Soviet science and technology is a much-discussed feature of the modern world: the commercial portability of insight. For Texas Instruments, this means ongoing cash flow from the microchip patent even when Asian companies build the computers. For Soviet scientists and engineers, it means, in principle, that they can get rich even if they don't live anywhere near a modern, competitive factory—which, of course, none of them does.

The importance of thus freeing Soviet brains from their nation's paleolithic industrial infrastructure

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would be hard to exaggerate. One reason reforming any one area of the Soviet economy has proved so hard is that, except with the simplest commercial endeavors—women selling homemade bread on the streets of Moscow, say—each screwed-up area is dependent on so many other screwed-up areas. Starting a "cooperative" to build even something as trivial as a new and improved transistor radio would be hopeless, because you couldn't count on any of the nation's unreformed factories for a reliable supply of components—even assuming you could vanquish the various legal and bureaucratic nightmares that have haunted cooperatives. But selling an engineering idea to a foreign company that *is* capable of realizing it, and of marketing it abroad, is simpler. This should be a sizable magnet for the hard currency that the Soviet Union desperately needs: somehow selling, or at least renting, the contents of the millions of Soviet brains with advanced degrees in science or engineering. There are several ways to do this, none of which the Soviets have yet mastered.

Method One: Free-lance inventors sell their ideas. The classic case is software design. The editor in chief of *Byte* magazine reported last year after traveling to Moscow that Soviet programmers are "easily the equals of any in the West." So why aren't these people rich? There are several reasons, including (*a*) language barriers, (*b*) a certain obliviousness to the concept of meeting consumers' needs, and (*c*) the high cost of computers; a 386 PC clone, which can be had in the United States for

Down the Drain

The much-discussed Soviet "brain drain" is actually two brain drains. One has reached large proportions, and is eroding the nation's scientific and technological base. The other is smaller and may be less damaging—perhaps even healthful.

The first of these consists of Jewish brains. Jewish scientists long ago learned to live with on-the-job anti-Semitism. A Jewish lab director who wanted to hire another Jew might be told (as was one petrochemical engineer who now lives in the United States), "Don't make a synagogue in your laboratory." He might even be told this by a friend—perhaps even another Jew; it was just a helpful reminder not to attract unwelcome Party scrutiny by exceeding unwritten limits.

Glasnost changed things. Within the scientific establishment, the more overt forms of anti-Semitism were, if anything, toned down. But that was more than made up for elsewhere, especially in the Soviet press, whose liberation energized anti-Semitic writers. And these include prominent members of the scientific community, such as Igor Shafarevich, considered by some the greatest living Soviet mathematician. Roald Sagdeev, formerly director of the Soviet Union's Space Research Institute and now at the University of Maryland, says, "Always we had quite a few well-known scientists who were anti-Semites, and they are even more outspoken now."

It is hard for Westerners to appreciate the vividness of the fear many Jews feel. Last year, while in Moscow, I visited the apartment of a Jewish linguist. It was a tiny place in a grim neighborhood. He said his children suffered ethnic slurs at school and that his neighbors had used them too, most recently while complaining about his dog's barking. It was a vicious circle: the dog, a big German shepherd, was there expressly for the purpose of attacking intruders in the event of large-scale anti-Semitic violence, which many Jews consider a real possibility. The linguist now lives in Australia, where he found a teaching job.

Tens of thousands of scientists and engineers have been among the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews immigrating to Israel over the past few years. The number coming to America is smaller but consequential, as some are at eminent research centers—Bell Labs, for example, and the physics departments at Princeton, Stanford, and MIT. Good estimates of the damage to Soviet science are difficult, but it is said that in some disciplines, such as theoretical physics, as many as half of the best Soviet scientists have traditionally been Jews. An end to the exodus is likely to come only from a sudden closing of the exit door or the increasingly dismal prospects abroad, as good jobs in Israel get filled and immigration restrictions elsewhere remain tight.

The second Soviet brain drain consists of scientists who leave not because of persecution, but because they would like to work with modern lab equipment and alongside modern colleagues. For now the number of non-Jewish scientists leaving is small as a fraction of the total. But it does include noted physicists and mathematicians, and has grown over the last few years. So there has been a lot of hand-wringing in the Soviet Union about what will happen if travel rules are indeed loosened in 1993 in keeping with a law passed by the Supreme Soviet before the aborted coup. Mikhail Gorbachev has not been above pandering to this fear. Last year, trying to convince Party members to raise salaries for the best scientists, he said, "A colossal hunt is already going on, by America, for our mathematicians, our technicians and programmers. A hunt! A hunt! That's what America does: it spares no expense, it buys people up throughout the world."

Harley Balzer of Georgetown University has argued that the brain drain will slow as the market for scientists abroad gets saturated. And anyway, he believes, a little brain drain might not be a bad thing for Soviet science. Many Soviet scientists who aren't Jewish want only to spend a year or two in Western labs; they have strong family and social roots back home, and many find Western culture disorienting. Balzer notes that the ones who stay longer and gain secure posts in Western science are then in a position to sponsor the many who won't—as visiting professors or graduate students or postdoctoral researchers. The result could be a series of revolving doors that send Soviet scientists back home intellectually enriched and perhaps more commercially valuable. Any Soviet politicians tempted to claim that such a pattern would represent some sort of capitalist plot need only listen to the various Americans who will be yelling about the resulting "theft" of American science.

R. W.

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$1,200, costs many years' salary for a state-employed programmer. But the most basic reason is illustrated by the famous case of Alexei Pajitnov.

In 1985 Pajitnov created Tetris, an addictive computer game that has now been sold to more than 5 million Americans as part of a Nintendo package. Pajitnov hasn't gotten any royalties. They all go to his former employer, the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which controls the international rights. And as for domestic rights: there aren't any. An enterprising Soviet programmer is free to peddle his software at home, but other enterprising citizens are free to copy it and peddle it too, so it's advisable to get a very good price on the first dozen copies. This absence of effective intellectual property law makes Pajitnov a much less inspiring role model than he might otherwise be.

Before the aborted coup clouded the picture, help seemed to be on the way. Partly under pressure from U.S. trade officials, the Supreme Soviet had passed patent and copyright laws that, in broad contour, are quite Western. The copyright law was to take effect in January of next year, and the patent law took effect a few weeks before the coup. But "effect" deserves quotation marks. Neither law has penalties for infringement. It was up to each republic's parliament to flesh out the enforcement mechanism, a process that was shoved offstage in mid-August and has yet to return.

And there's another problem. Even if Pajitnov's software had been safe from domestic pirating, the fact would remain that he developed it on government computers, and government time, and so didn't own it. The same thing might happen in the West, of course, but in the West researchers have the option of going to the private sector and fetching the salary their brains warrant. After six years of perestroika, there's still no such option in the Soviet Union. Researchers are supposedly free to start their own "scientific and technical cooperatives." But where? Most modern inventions (pharmaceutical, say, or electronic) are things you can't just cook up in your garage—especially in the Soviet Union, where you can't easily buy even Radio-Shack-level research equipment (not to mention houses with garages). And attempts to start cooperatives by moonlighting at government labs, though officially encouraged, have been smothered by bureaucracy and the jealous stinginess of supervisors. So virtually all new inventions will come under government auspices until an appreciable number of state labs get sold to investors, something you shouldn't hold your breath for (see "Method Two," below).

On the brighter side: some ministries and institutes have in recent years taken it on themselves to encourage innovation by cutting workers in on proceeds from their ideas. But success has been mixed, at best. Some time ago, a Soviet engineer designed a new kind of car radiator, smaller than usual and only half as heavy. He showed it to the head of the radiator factory that his lab serves. The factory head declined to use the idea, pointing out that, since his production goals were stated in terms of weight, building a lightweight radiator would make it impossible to meet them. ("True story," swears Barney O'Meara of Kiser Research, a Washington firm that mediates East-West technology transfer.) Still, the factory head, a good friend of the inventor's, promised to help him market the idea abroad. Kiser Research got some Western capitalists interested. But they had a few preliminary questions and wanted to know who was authorized to answer them—the inventor or some higher authority? They made this simple inquiry a year ago, and the various parties haven't yet worked out an answer.

These sorts of frustrations are common, and they're due not just to the absence of intellectual property law, but to the absence of law, period. When legal questions arise in the Soviet Union, there's often no precise governing code to turn to, and no single authority to interpret the less precise ones. This problem grew more acute as perestroika razed structures that once monopolized interpretation and glasnost weakened respect for authority. Long before the failed coup further confused issues of legal jurisdiction, Western lawyers had developed a special technique for nailing down East-West deals. Rather than simply consult statute and assure the client of a sound legal footing, they would get as many conceivably relevant Soviet officials as possible to sign onto the contract and hope some of them would still be around when problems arose.

Method Two: The "joint venture." Why not have Western companies just come in, buy labs or build new ones, then give researchers commercially savvy guidance and market the results? This is a question Gorbachev has asked, and Western companies have typically responded with an embarrassing silence. Again, a big reason is the absence of a reassuring legal infrastructure. Also, there have been those eerie reactionary political winds, which suddenly reached gale force in August. Though the government in some sense withstood them, the post-putsch Soviet Union isn't a paragon of political stability.

And, anyway, the problem isn't just political stability per se, but a certain atmospheric hostility toward capitalism. One Soviet commentator, critiquing government plans to set up research centers with Western capital, warned in *Dialog* last year: "We need to take a careful look at Western initiatives to determine which of them truly reflect good will and a desire to help us and which reflect a desire to get rich at our expense and to weaken us." The whole idea of capitalism, of course, is that these aren't the only two options. Western precepts as elementary as this one—that calculated self-interest can be de facto generosity—have long eluded some officials in the vanguard of perestroika. It's commonly assumed that this ignorance is dissipating now that the aborted coup has brought the "real" reformers to the fore. But the truth is that Boris Yeltsin, the fair-haired boy of the American right, has yet to earn his capitalism merit badge. He long ago started making the absurd promise

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of transition to a market economy without higher prices, and one of his first acts after the coup failed was to authorize price controls in Moscow.

Method Three: Rent-a-brain. Some Western companies have taken to paying Soviet labs for the temporary services of a research group, redirecting, or at least fine-tuning, its work in keeping with commercial reality (and perhaps revamping its lab). In 1990 one institute agreed to do agricultural and pharmaceutical research for Monsanto for $1.5 million over three years, but it doesn't take nearly that much to get a lab head's attention. Small teams have been rented for as little as $50,000. That's peanuts compared with American R&D costs, but for a Soviet research group of four or five, it's literally decades' worth of normal wages.

But who gets the money? Again: don't expect to find an answer in writing. In the murky world of perestroika, different institutes, and different ministries, came up with different answers. Maybe the workers would get a big chunk of the hard currency. Maybe the government would get the dollars, the institute would get some new equipment, and the workers would get a few rubles. And maybe what the workers would get is simply to keep their jobs. Gorbachev cut research funding across the board—in military labs, industrial labs, even the hallowed labs of the Academy of Sciences, and the future seems to hold more of the same. Since no lab director looks forward to handing out hundreds of pink slips (especially if one of them bears his name), this has encouraged enterprise in seeking Western cash. In fact, this may be the only sense in which perestroika succeeded in spurring innovation within the research sector. Ministries, institutes, and even individual research teams have gotten assertive about approaching Western businessmen.

Unfortunately, "rent-a-brain" schemes, like joint ventures, have suffered from the political climate. Last year the Arthur D. Little consulting firm and the Soviet Academy of Sciences agreed to set up a company called E'West that would pay for first access to technologies developed, sometimes with Western guidance, in thirty-one of the academy's institutes. Press reports explained that "the projected $50 million funding for the venture will come from a syndicate of Japanese, U.S., and European multinationals." A year later, in early August, there was no syndicate in sight; a Little spokesman said would-be investors were skeptical not of the available technology but of the "environment" in the Soviet Union. Prescient investors. The deal is now dead, and the spokesman calls the events of mid-August "the straw that broke the camel's back."

Just because the Soviet Union still hasn't provided the several things needed to rehabilitate its science and technology—effective intellectual property laws, a tangible legal infrastructure, firm evidence of enduring respect for capitalism—doesn't mean there haven't been reforms. The problem is that some of the reforms have borne a disturbing resemblance to the things that got the country into trouble to begin with. New bureaucratic acronyms have been invented for the purpose of propping up old bureaucratic acronyms. The State Committee for Informatics and Computer Science created the "All Union Society of Informatics and Computer Science," whose members were summoned, notified of their membership, handed an anonymously authored charter, and told that their task would be to run new "Centers of Scientific and Technical Services" and advise the State Committee for Informatics and Computer Science.

In the Soviet press these vestiges of ever-more-impotent centralized planning have appeared alongside ever-clearer signs of industrial and technological decay. A sample from this year: "All the country's factories have stopped producing insulin." And: "Eighty to ninety percent of equipment used at medical engineering enterprises, subordinate to the USSR Ministry of Instrument-Making, is in disrepair." On a more positive note: "The All-Union Biotechnology Society has evolved a comprehensive biotechnology development program that will apply from 1991 to 2005." That's a load off everyone's mind.

The failed coup may eventually brighten prospects for science and engineering, but in the short term things look dimmer. Westerners are more confused than ever about which officials can speak for which labs. As of early October, Gorbachev and Yeltsin had reportedly agreed to divvy up the institutes of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, with some going to Russia and some staying under Union control. (Almost all the institutes of the *Soviet* academy are in Russia, but other republics have long had their own academies, while Russia hasn't.) Should the Soviet Union break up, or weaken to the point of irrelevance, Russia would hold most of the cards, with two-thirds of the Union's scientists. Next in line would be the Ukraine and Byelorussia, which have extensive military and industrial research labs. Kazakhstan gets honorable mention, with lots of space-program research.

So far nothing about the new Soviet Union seems likely to change the generic dream of first-rate scientists and engineers: to go West, either on sabbatical or forever. The sabbaticals may end up helping Soviet science (see "Down the Drain," page 23). But the one-way tickets, purchased especially by Jews amid increasingly voluble anti-Semitism, have outnumbered the round trips.

One of these tickets was bought by Oksman, the disposable-goods enthusiast. He seems to be settling into his new home gracefully. Less than two years after getting here, he and a colleague, also a Soviet immigrant, are trying to capitalize on a new technique for preserving food. (Yes, even newer than Saran Wrap.) The project is still young, but they've already gotten an American businessman interested. If Oksman had had this idea before coming to America, would he have tried to market it? He laughs at the question. He *did* have the idea before coming to America. But "it doesn't matter, because Soviet Union is a tomb for any ideas." •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Crimes and Various Criminals

Up to now David Mamet has usually been very sure about where he stood in relation to realism. In plays like *American Buffalo* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*, he intensified realism past naturalism to the point of abstraction. In a play like *The Water Engine* or a screenplay like *House of Games*, he began with a species of abstraction and used realism as underpinning. But his second screenplay, *Things Change*, seemed less secure vis-à-vis realism. His third is even less secure. (I'm speaking only of the screenplays he wrote for himself to direct.) **Homicide** (Triumph) is worrisome.

The first half-hour or so is the best police film I can remember. Joe Mantegna, a Mamet stalwart, plays a Jewish metropolitan detective named Bobby Gold. (Mamet has written two plays about a Hollywood character named Bobby Gould; I don't get the connection.) As with most big-city police officers today, Gold's colleagues and his criminal opponents are a mixture of races and religions, blacks prominent among them. Racial and religious epithets get flung, joshingly and less joshingly.

At the start Gold is involved in a drug bust, in which the FBI is also involved, and friction between the cops and the Feds makes sparks fly. This, plus station-house jousting, plus an episode with a mad prisoner who steals a pistol, all show Gold to be a cool professional who knows the realities of his job in both the daily and the long-term senses. Mamet writes these scenes with his ear at its marvelous best, finding the rhythms in the vernacular, catching the lightning-play of minds in broken utterance. His taut directing, helped by Barbara Tulliver's editing, makes the picture feel crammed almost to bursting yet not overstuffed. We get just as much as every split second can possibly contain—of story, character, forward motion.

We begin to think we are in for a film that will do more than justify its familiar materials by using them better than anyone has done, a kind of "Hill Street Blues" in excelsis; and we look forward to its completion, the wholeness, which could have its own Mametian beauty. Then comes the derailment.

Speeding to a follow-up on their drug case, Mamet and his partner halt to help a uniformed cop investigating a murder. This interruption not only entangles Gold in a second case (against orders) while he is still on the first one, it soon gets him snared in the activities of an underground Jewish organization that combats local anti-Semitism with terrorism and is, or has been, connected with gun-running to Israel.

I pass no judgment on whether or not such groups exist. (I'm not sure that Kahane or his heirs quite fit the picture.) The relevant matter here is that this group and its activities are an intrusion into the film's schema. That there is no kind of preparation, in story terms, for these developments might be excused on the ground that a policeman's lot is not a predictable one. What's much more ruinous is that there is no real preparation in Gold's character for his reactions to this new involvement. The man who, a few film minutes before, was a hardened and capable detective soon says to a terrorist leader, "I want to help." He volunteers to commit a crime in aid of the group, then finds himself being blackmailed to help the group further.

Only one element in Mamet's treatment of Gold helps these changes in character. We never see Gold's home, how he lives, whether he's married, and so on. Thus, when he says to the group that he wants to belong, that he has no home, the words have some small resonance. But Mamet puts too much strain on this one fiber. What's worse, he quickly slides from incredible character change to incredible, stale plot device.

Some instances. Gold's two cases, the Jewish matter and the drug matter, come to a head in the same evening, and he deals strenuously with *both* of them that night. This is Mel Gibson heroics, straight Movieland stuff. When his partner gets killed in the drug chase, Gold clenches his jaw and moves out—single-handed—to avenge him, like every hero of every cornball police (or Western) flick. The chase of a fugitive drug king takes place in an abandoned warehouse that seems to be passed on from film to film as the setting for a shadowy, menacing pursuit. Gold loses his gun en route and doesn't even know it. He is shot at close range—twice— and survives.

If Mamet has been blinded to these banalities by his intrusion of the Jewish material, the trouble doesn't end there. The picture is hurt in another, larger way. What might have been a police

FILMS WORTH SEEING

City of Hope. *An acid etching of moral sleaze in an American city. John Sayles wrote it, but his directing and editing are what really impress. (Reviewed 10/14/91)* **The Indian Runner.** *Two brothers, one a highway patrolman, the other an outlaw. Sean Penn's screenplay lays on too much symbolism from the title, but he understands the milieu and directs his good cast very well. (10/21/91)* **The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe.** *Jane Wagner wrote and Lily Tomlin performs this film of Tomlin's one-person stage show. Though some characters get a bit blurry, much of it is sharply funny. (10/7/91)* **Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll.** *Another one-person stage show on film. Written by the performer, Eric Bogosian, who is less funny than Tomlin but more forceful. His characters, too, blur a bit, still he, too, is sharp-eyed. (10/7/91)* —**SK**

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thriller that achieved some meaning through its very form becomes a broken-backed attempt at thematic statement. Nothing comes of this Jewish material, either in sheer story terms or in catalysis of Gold. The detective is simply left stranded and bilked. Did Mamet feel, because he is Jewish, some long-deferred obligation to deal with a Jewish subject? If so, this ungainly attempt to pay a debt has skewed his usually acute sense of Israel and the territories on both sides of it, and has made some of this film (almost frantically) spurious.

Not Joe Mantegna, however. The part was tailor-made for him. It doesn't exceed the limits of his talent, as did his role in *Things Change*. Whenever Gold doesn't ring true here, it's the author's fault, not the actor's. Mostly, Mantegna comprehends what he has to do and lays it out for us with a skilled hand. The only other performance of note comes, in a short scene near the end, from Ving Rhames as the drug boss. He has power.

Goldie Hawn's latest, **Deceived** (Touchstone), is dreadful. Apparently she thought she'd branch out into serious acting. A mistake. She is utterly lost, and the director, Damian Harris, hasn't helped her to fill the vacancies that she thinks denote gravity. In this screenplay by Mary Agnes Donohue and Derek Saunders, Hawn plays a woman who doesn't know her husband's true identity, and that's enough about that.

The film's only interest is in its production notes, where we learn some things about the producers. One of them graduated from NYU. Another graduated from Northwestern and got a Ph.D. at NYU. A third went to Phillips Andover, then majored in English at Yale. A fourth studied literature at UCLA and Cambridge. And *Deceived* is what these four laureates have come up with.

The irony is not that they didn't produce a serious picture; one no longer expects educated people, particularly in the American film world, to have that sort of aspiration. It's that they haven't a clue about how to make a good commercial picture. •

The BAD-mouthing of America

BY GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

BAD: or, The Dumbing of America by Paul Fussell

(Summit Books, 201 pp., $19)

Finally we have the book that we have long awaited: a primer in SC (Social Correctness), to complement PC (Political Correctness). In his latest work, Paul Fussell provides us with a guide to correct thinking on a multitude of important subjects: advertising, airlines, airports, architecture, banks, behavior, beliefs, books, and so on through the alphabet, ending prematurely with television, thus depriving us of his views on undertakers, vivisection, women, xenophobia, youth, and zoolatry.

More specifically, what Fussell has given us is a guide to what is bad about our advertising, airlines, airports, architecture, and so on—or rather, what is BAD about them. And because almost everything about them is BAD, we are invited to conclude that much of America itself is, as Fussell's title pithily puts it, *BAD*. Lest we miss the point, or are among the "millions of BAD people" too obtuse to know how BAD things are, his subtitle makes it clear: "The Dumbing of America."

"Bad" would not be so bad. "Bad" is what everyone knows to be bad—"dog-do [sic] on the sidewalk, or a failing grade, or a case of scarlet fever." "BAD," by contrast, is what only superior folk like Fussell know to be BAD: "something phony, clumsy, witless, untalented, vacant, or boring that many Americans can be persuaded is genuine, graceful, bright, or fascinating." Bad is universal; BAD is pre-eminently American. "The great crappiness," Fussell tells us in his graceful, witty way, "is essentially American."

As a checklist of Socially Correct opinion, and as a cross-reference of the Socially Correct and the Politically Correct, this book is invaluable. The introduction gets us into the spirit of things by suggesting some of the finer political nuances of BADness. Thus Lawrence Welk is a "low" example of BAD and George Bush a "high" example; the Viet-

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MARK A. HELLER & SARI NUSSEIBEH

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nam War was not a "bad" war, but a "really BAD" war; and Lyndon Johnson and William Westmoreland were the "admen" ("BADmen"?) for that BAD war. From this promising beginning, we go to the first entry, Advertising, which is "the *sine qua non* of BAD," and which became "really deep BAD" in the Reagan period, when pretty girls began to be displaced by flags and patriotic themes were used to tout nuclear energy and the cigarette industry.

The next item, airlines, displays the same mixture of the political and the social. "The United States," it opens, "is the only highly industrialized country with privately owned airlines, which means that profit-grabbing and the attendant fraud will dominate their operations, inviting them to engage in BAD in a big way." (This may have to be revised in a later edition as other countries carry out plans to privatize their airlines, having discovered that government ownership is no guarantee against badness, let alone BADness.) But capitalism is only one reason for the BADness of airlines. Another is the "proletarianization" of air travel since the Second World War. Fussell quotes Paul Bowles, who recalls the good old times (the 1930s) when he had his own cabin, complete with bed, sheets, and blankets, and who no longer wants to travel, "now that the world had worsened." Fussell sympathizes with him. Air travel, which was once "almost elegant, or at least pleasant," has become extremely disagreeable, with boring, vulgar people crowding the planes and airports, queuing up for the toilets, incapable of engaging in "civilized human intercourse" or of maintaining a "civil distance" from their neighbors. "Social conditions," we are advised, "are probably the worst on planes making the New York-southern Florida run."

Banks are BAD for the same reason, now that everyone is using them. Once built like "marble temples" or "the grander sort of Episcopal churches," they have come to resemble "lower-middle-class motel offices with mock-friendly housewives in charge." Because there are too many clients to be known personally to these housewifely tellers, the depositors are treated like "proles," made to wait in roped-off lines, suffer the indignity of having their signatures checked, and subjected to canned music (Handel, Mozart, or even worse).

Not all cities are BAD; only a large number of them. Fussell names the worst of them, from Atlantic City, New Jersey, to Juneau, Alaska (thoughtfully providing the states for the sake of his illiterate readers). But there are a host of others—all those cities where one can't get a decent meal (by the standards of the *Mobil Travel Guide*) or a drink ("it's hard to imagine what any civilized person might be doing in Salt Lake City"), or where SAT scores are low and there is no public transportation (we are not told how many people in such cities own cars). Washington, D.C., is singled out as an especially "impressive" example of a BAD city. It lacks a decent theater, has a second-rate newspaper ("complete with horoscopes and funnies"), and is full of embassies and consulates occupied by "very dull people ... quite devoid of originality, wit, or charm."

And so on through the alphabet. Hotels in the old days, before the advent of Holiday Inns and Howard Johnsons, were only "bad to fair," but now they are "almost uniformly BAD." Again Washington gets special mention for its most famous hotel (unnamed, perhaps for reasons of libel), where a Pentagon contract may be "consummated over BAD booze in a BAD bar, for 100,000 monkey wrenches at $75 each." Then there are the BAD movies that contribute to the "infantilization of the electorate" and thus "the election of Ronald Reagan and George Bush and the agitation over flag desecration." Or the BAD Naval Missile Firing responsible for the crash of the Pan Am 747 at Lockerbie, Scotland. Or the BAD newspapers, like *USA Today*, which also happens to be "the perfect emblem of Reaganism." Or the BAD People, such as Jessie [sic] Helms, Richard Nixon, Ed Meese, Oliver North, William Bennett, Robert Bork, Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Bakker, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Fawn Hall, and George Steinbrenner. Or BAD Public Sculpture, of which the "prime example" is the Statue of Liberty, "that archetypal manifestation of the national yearning for kitsch." Or BAD Restaurants, where the discerning diner is repelled by the "one-half polyester" napkin or the misspelled *"Crème Anglais."* Or, finally, BAD television, "a grossly proletarian medium," which is bad when it serves its primary function of selling diapers and denture cleaners, but becomes BAD when it attempts to deal with books, ideas, or "civilized discourse."

What is obvious in this compendium of the BAD is not only the mutual reenforcement of PC and SC, but the dependence of this SC, Social Correctness, upon another SC, Social Class. This is not surprising in view of Fussell's earlier book *Class*, published in 1983, which dealt in great detail on the differences of dress, speech, food, houses, recreations, and other vital signs that distinguish proletarians from the middle classes and both of these from the upper classes. (At a time when even Marxists have abandoned "proletarians" as patently inappropriate for American workers, Fussell insists upon the term, generally in the derisive form of "proles." "Working classes" he regards as a British euphemism.)

In the earlier book, as in the present one, Fussell's animus is directed more against the "middles" than against the "proles." Although he loses no opportunity to ridicule the proles, with their T-shirts emblazoned with lewd messages and ball caps with beer labels, he professes to find them pathetic, whereas the middles are "loathsome." (The upper classes are merely "fatuous.") In that book, too, it is the ubiquitous polyester that symbolizes the essence of BADness: the "crappy polyester shirt" for men, the "purple polyester pantsuit" for women, the "small percentage of polyester in an Oxford-cloth shirt" discerned by the "elite eye" (alerted to it by that other definitive class guide, *The Official Preppy Handbook*). After remarking upon Reagan's "Los Angeles (or even Orange) County Wasp-Chutzpah" style of dress, which makes him look "like a prole setting off for church," Fussell "hesitates even to speculate about the polyester levels of his outfits." (Outfits? Surely that is a prole, or worse, a middle-class, word!)

One sometimes wonders what country Paul Fussell inhabits. Did the upper-middle-class American woman, circa 1983, "invariably" appear in a "skirt of gray flannel, Stuart plaid, or khaki; a navy-blue cardigan, which may be cable-stitched; a white blouse with Peter Pan collar; hose with flat shoes; hair preferably in a barrette"? And do the middle classes (now, then, or ever) drink "martoonis" rather than martinis, and frequent restaurants where grilled salmon is invariably accompanied by slices of canned grapefruit? And do they speak of living rooms as "living forums," of bedrooms as "sleeping chambers," of shoes as "footwear," and of glasses as "eyewear"? (These euphemisms are attributed to the people themselves, not to advertisers.) And is a plastic Popeye a common adornment on TV sets in prole households?

More important, one begins to wonder about the entire enterprise. Fussell, after all, is a serious literary critic and historian, who prides himself on being (unlike most of his countrymen) intelligent, cultivated, and sensitive. Why, then, is he so obsessed with the mundane and meretricious aspects of life? Why does he spend so much time in BAD hotels and restaurants, read so many BAD books, watch so many BAD movies and

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television shows, consort with so many BAD people? And why does he then compound all of that BADness by writing about them? Surely this itself is a species of vulgarity that approaches the very essence of BAD. If it is the height of pretentiousness, and therefore of BADness, on the part of the middle classes to try so strenuously to differentiate themselves from the proles, why is Fussell's elaborate exercise in differentiation not also a mark of pretentiousness and BADness?

The explanation may lie in the special "category" that Fussell devised, in his earlier book, for himself and his kind. He called it "category X." The people in this category exist outside the class structure. They are bohemians, artists, intellectuals, expatriates, even "the more gifted journalists." An "X" person can be contradictory, outrageous, even vulgar without becoming *déclassé*, because he belongs to no class; indeed he is obliged to defy all the conventions to prove that he belongs to that superior "category." Thus, when an invitation calls for "black tie," he appears in a dark suit ("of a distinctly unstylish, archaic cut"); or when a suit is called for (at a funeral, perhaps?) he omits the tie. By the same token, he has license to indulge in all those BAD things that are reprehensible in others.

A simple-minded reader of this book, recalling Fussell's contempt for advertising as the "*sine qua non*" of BAD and of the "publicity enterprise" as the "propelling" force behind all that is BAD in modern life, might suppose that the author would have instructed his agent and publisher to refrain at least from the more vulgar forms of advertising and publicity. Yet the reviewer of Fussell's book has been advised, by means of a handwritten (or possibly, worse yet, a pseudo-handwritten) card signed by his agent or publisher's representative, that the author would be in the States during the last weeks of October for "publicity," and that he would be available for interviews.

One's first thought is that the book is an elaborate leg-pull, an example of that large genre of humorous books that aspire to the best-seller list. Occasionally one suspects a mischievous, even comic intent in some of Fussell's illustrations of the "dumbing of America," such as the appalling fact that most Americans, in this day of mass college education, do not know that formal academic attire is called a "gown" rather than a "robe" and a "hood" rather than a "sash"—"just as they've not heard of Chapman's *Homer* or Spinoza or the Great Chain of Being." To one reader, at least, that sounds very funny. But when Fussell goes on about this for several paragraphs, returns to it later, and cites it as an example of the abysmal "public ignorance" and lack of "cultural literacy" of a national Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper, the reader begins to take it seriously. A humorous book should surely be good-humored and witty. But this is conspicuously ill-humored and heavy-handed.

Moreover, it is too insistently political to be funny—although here too, in its solemn adherence to every cliché of PC, some readers might find it comical. The final paragraph of the book so neatly amalgamates PC and SC that it is a parody of both genres. BAD has gone so far, Fussell concludes, that nothing can slow it down—not even blowing up the teachers' colleges and nationalizing the airports, curbing the national impulse to brag and raising the capital gains tax, teaching people to sneer at advertising and putting the homeless in a Civilian Conservation Corps, encouraging diners to speak out against BAD food and abandoning the remnants of the "self-congratulatory cold war psychosis." Because none of this is likely to happen, "the only recourse is to laugh at BAD. If you don't, you're going to have to cry."

Fussell is right. Laughter may be the reader's only recourse—but laughter not so much at BAD as at *BAD*. How else can

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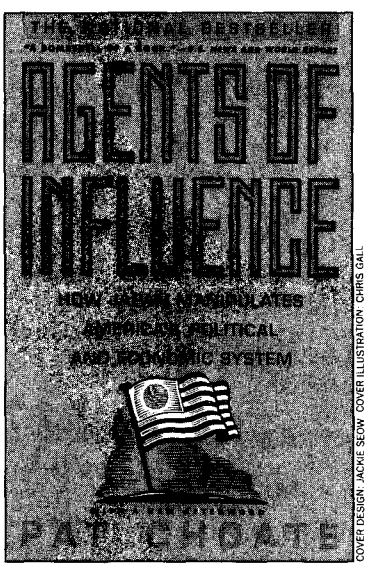

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we bear to read, again and again, his indictment of America:

> The great crappiness is essentially American.
>
> The USA is the world headquarters of moral pretension.
>
> America's main contribution to the world is BAD. It is the thing that we are best at.
>
> Actual American life as experienced by most people is so boring, uniform, and devoid of significant soul, so isolated from traditions of the past and the resonances of European culture, that it demands to be "raised" and misrepresented as something wonderful. BAD thus becomes an understandable reaction to the national emptiness and dullness.
>
> How about a country which spends billions of dollars on "exploring" outer space when millions of the poor and hungry sleep, like the natives of Calcutta, on its city streets? How about a nation in which tens of millions are so culturally and spiritually empty that their main way of defining themselves and achieving self-respect is to "go shopping"? What about a country slavering to Americanize Eastern Europe, nurturing there the values that bring us white stretch limos, Donald Trump, Jim and Tammy Bakker, Leona Helmsley, and Messrs. Milken and Boesky?

After almost 200 pages of this, it is not reassuring to be told, in a single paragraph two pages before the end of the book, that "not everything in America is bad or BAD," that there is enough "taste" left to "keep Muhammad Ali generally out of sight" and to recognize, "if only implicitly and by silence," that the Vietnam War was a "scandal." Fussell goes so far as to concede that there are some good things, and even VERY GOOD things, in America: its open borders ("when they've not been compromised by follies like the McCarran-Walter Act"), the "assumption" that its citizens are free, and the First Amendment, which together make up "a package of values so admirable as to be almost worth dying for."

"Almost" worth dying for, but not quite. That equivocal note reminds us that Fussell is better known as the author of two influential books on the two world wars, both of which convey the message that neither of those wars was worth dying for.

The first of these, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, published in 1975, was an impressive if not entirely persuasive work. Describing in graphic detail the horrors of trench warfare, and quoting copiously from the poems, memoirs, and fiction of contemporaries (many of them participants in the war), the book powerfully reinforced what was by then the conventional view of the First World War: that it was barbarous, murderous, and unnecessary. The book was praised for its skillful exploitation of the literary evidence and its imaginative treatment of the war as a literary construct, in terms of language and rhetoric, myth and ritual, theater and romance, image and symbol, irony and satire. Irony is, in fact, the constant refrain of the book. A subheading in the first chapter, "The War as Ironic Action," could well serve as the title of the whole.

Two years ago Fussell published a sequel called *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*. Using the same kinds of sources and techniques, he came to much the same conclusions: this war, too, was barbarous, murderous, and unnecessary. This time, however, the critics were far less well disposed to Fussell's ironies, finding fault with the evidence and the thesis. Still, the book is instructive in ways that the author never intended. For it unwittingly reveals the shortcomings not only of the earlier book but, much more important, of a mode of analysis that has become increasingly fashionable in recent years: the use of literary concepts—irony, for example—to "demythologize" or "demystify" the subject under analysis. In the case of history, irony serves as an invitation to the historian to impose his "critical" or "ironic" imagination upon the events and characters in history, quite as if they were events or characters in a novel. If one did not know that Fussell is a professor of English, the author of such much-admired works as *Theory of Prosody in Eighteenth-Century England* and *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism*, one could deduce it from his books on the two world wars.

When *The Great War* was published sixteen years ago, such an approach to history was sufficiently novel to excite admiration, and the thesis itself was sufficiently familiar to allay criticism. That war had already been demythologized—in political and human terms, however, rather than literary and aesthetic ones. Historians had taken account not only of the casualties and the follies of the war, but also of such other pertinent facts as national and imperial rivalries, the balance of power in Europe, the nature of the contending regimes, and the implications of the victory of an authoritarian power over a liberal one. Fussell offers no such political accounting, no countervailing force to the tragic "irony" of the war. Regarding the war itself as a form of "ironic action," and "irony as the appropriate interpretative means" for understanding the war, Fussell presents the reader with the simple scenario: "In the Great War 8 million people were destroyed because two persons, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his Consort, had been shot." It is this disparity between cause and effect that condemns the war as utterly meaningless, as "sheer madness."

Other historians who have a similarly bleak view of the First World War have come to it not only by way of a more complicated analysis of cause and effect, but also by seeing it in the perspective of the Second World War. For the first war is all the more meaningless by contrast to the second, which was all too meaningful; here there is no doubt of the facts of German aggression or of the consequences of a Nazi victory. For Fussell, however, the two wars are much of a piece. His only uncertainty is which war was slightly more meaningless. At one point in the earlier volume he has the second war offering "even more preposterous ironies" than the first, though a few lines later the first was "more ironic than any before or since." In the later volume he credits the first war with "presumably clearer ethical purposes" than the second, although he does not make much of this. What he does make much of, however, here as in the earlier volume, is the familiar theme of irony.

While the Second World War provides Fussell with no such powerful "ironies" as trench warfare, it does suggest to him "more preposterous" ones, such as those detailed in the chapter on "Chickenshit" (the military "obsession" with haircuts and the like) or in the chapter on "Drinking Far Too Much, Copulating Too Little" (the soldier's "anodyne" to "absurdity and boredom and chickenshit"). And if the leaders of the second war were not the bungling "Old Men" of the first war, who senselessly destroyed millions of lives, they were cheap rhetoricians who shamelessly degraded the language. Thus Winston Churchill, that "perpetual schoolboy," is criticized for being unable to "reprehend" (a curious word in this context) "Axis evil" without sounding a note of "self-righteousness, even priggishness." And all those speeches that have been immortalized—Churchill's "We will fight on the beaches," de Gaulle's "France has lost a battle but she has not lost the war," Roosevelt's "A date which will live in infamy"—are derided as phrasemaking "in the tradition of advertising display copy."

Fussell deplores the "ideological vacuum" in which men fought without knowing what they were fighting for.

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As for those men who did happen to know what they were fighting for, who found purpose and virtue in the Allied cause, they are ridiculed for vapid "high-mindedness." An entire chapter is devoted to such egregious displays of "high-mindedness"—Eisenhower, for example, praying to God to bless "this great and noble undertaking," or the sailor writing his father to reassure him that now that he has the great Red Army on his side, "the fight for freedom" would go on and "a free people will win."

If there is a hero in Fussell's book on the Second World War, it is, appropriately enough, a writer: Cyril Connolly, one of the few independent spirits, we are told, to resist the prevalent "self-congratulatory mode." In fact, Connolly resisted so well that he described the war, in a passage quoted approvingly by Fussell, as a war of which "we are all ashamed," which "lowers the standard of thinking and feeling," and which is opposed to "every reasonable conception of what life is for, every ambition of the mind or delight of the senses." Here Fussell's own sense of irony deserts him, as he lavishes praise on a man who did not serve in the war but who "almost died from longing for France," and whose greatest suffering came from an "acute and anguished sense of wartime deprivation, not just from food and drink and subtlety but from Continental and Mediterranean travel." (In almost exactly the same words and in his own voice, Fussell makes this the main theme of his chapter on "Deprivation.")

Nor is there any ironic note in his admiration for Connolly's *The Unquiet Grave,* published pseudonymously toward the end of the war, in which Hitler is mentioned once in passing ("Marx with his carbuncles, Hitler with his Beer-Hall"), and which nostalgically recalls the pleasures of which the author has been unhappily deprived: truffles, freshly roasted coffee, the smell of brioches. This "descant of deprivation," Fussell finds, is a fitting accompaniment to Connolly's "sober excursus on the worldwide neurosis which issues in wars, especially this one." Fussell is equally enthusiastic, and unironic, about *Horizon,* the journal that Connolly edited during the war—a "brave anomaly," a noble attempt to keep culture alive in the midst of "the horrors and the darkness—and a paper shortage so severe as occasionally to reduce *Horizon* to sixty gray, crummy pages." Fussell remarks upon the "unlikelihood, if not the impossibility, of a phenomenon like *Horizon* appearing in the wartime U.S.A." In fact, of course, America had just such a journal, as Connolly himself certainly knew, since many of his writers were published in *Partisan Review*—Stephen Spender, Arthur Koestler, and most memorably George Orwell, whose "London Letters" appeared regularly throughout the war.

World War II, then, was BAD, and for some of the same reasons that America is BAD. If Fussell's America is not as "stupid and sadistic" as his war, it is irredeemably stupid and vulgar. Indeed, the BADness of America, we are told—the "genuine deep BAD"—dates from the end of the war. Connolly is quoted very little in Fussell's book, but his voice is discernible throughout. It is the voice of the aesthete and the snob repelled by the barbarous hordes clamoring at the gates.

In this glossary of BAD, one entry (a "genuine deep BAD" one, as Fussell would say) is unaccountably missing. This is "BAD faith": recognizing the pretensions of others but not of oneself, elevating social gaffes into spiritual failings and lapses of taste into moral evils, and compounding the banality of a radical-chic PC with the snobbery of a tory-chic SC.

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Divine Punches

By Gerald Early

Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times by Thomas Hauser

(Simon and Schuster, 543 pp., $24.95)

For even the knowing coves, for whom the significance of Muhammad Ali as a boxer and a cultural figure is beyond question, his eminence may be best understood by means of a particular set of comparisons, of a set of historical triads, if you will. The first of these triads would be Jesse Owens–Jackie Robinson–Muhammad Ali: the epochal black athletes who turned certain racial and social conventions on their heads. But in fact Joe Louis belongs in place of Ali as the pioneer black in American popular culture. Then there is the triad of Martin Luther King–Malcolm X–Muhammad Ali: the black leaders of the 1960s. But Ali, who was certainly an influential figure in the era, partly because his youth and his physical beauty symbolized the type of energy that American culture always romanticizes, was not a leader, or a thinker, in the sense that King and Malcolm were. Here again his name should be replaced, perhaps by Stokely Carmichael or Huey Newton. Ali does belong with Dick Gregory and James Brown, as an especially significant and self-consciously political black entertainer of the '60s, and with Jim Brown and Curt Flood as one of the great politicized black athletes. But the most telling of all the groupings is surely that of Muhammad Ali with Joe Louis and Jack Johnson: unquestionably the most important and accomplished of all the heavyweight boxing champions, black or white, these three athletes also were among the most influential blacks of their eras.

Johnson was born in Galveston, Texas, and won the title with little enough fanfare in 1908 against Tommy Burns, becoming the first black heavyweight champion. By 1910, however, he had become an infuriating figure to whites—partly because of his public penchant for white women (though other notable black men of the period, such as comedian George Walker and bantamweight champion George Dixon, had a harem of white girlfriends), and partly because he seemed neither grateful nor submissive in an era when Booker T. Washington's accommodationist tactics were the thing. It was Johnson who sparked the quest for a great white hope, for a white man to reclaim the title of titles in sports. His fight on July 4, 1910, against the former heavyweight champion Jim Jeffries was probably the most talked-about sporting event in American history. Johnson easily defeated Jeffries in fifteen rounds; Jeffries could not overcome a long layoff, and Johnson was clearly the better fighter.

Johnson's subsequent conviction under the Mann Act for transporting a white woman across state lines with the purpose of sexual intercourse, his flight to Europe, his loss of the title in 1915 to Jess Willard in Cuba (a fight that Johnson claimed, unpersuasively, was fixed), his return to the United State to serve his prison term at Leavenworth, his last days as a dime museum raconteur and shameless self-promoter: all these experiences have given his career a certain political resonance and the status of folklore—and a sort of absurd dimension of denigration. He was the most discussed, the most publicized, the most famous, and the most publicly hated black person of his generation.

Joe Louis, a native of Alabama, started his boxing career in Detroit, his family being one of the many that made the trek from the South to the industrial North and Middle West after the First World War and before the Depression. Unlike Johnson, Louis was able to learn his craft as an adolescent not in the brutal battle royals that pitted seven to nine black youths in a ring melee, but in the amateur Golden Gloves competition. This helped enormously when John Roxborough and Jilian Black, Louis's two black managers, carefully crafted his public image. In the 1920s the change in the way that boxers learned their craft and the social elevation in the audience for major prizefights (thanks to the promoter Tex Rickard, and to Jack Dempsey and later Gene Tunney) made it possible to present Louis as something other than a denizen of the low-life sporting world. This was a radical shift for a sport that was (in its modern inception in eighteenth-century England) sponsored by, if not the outright creation of, gamblers and the preposterously predatory world of thieves and hustlers of the fancy.

Louis, in order to have a shot at the title, which the boxing powers had not permitted a black to have since Johnson lost the title in 1915, had to be the very antithesis of the first black champion. Johnson smiled a lot, Louis looked sullen. Johnson bragged about beating white men in the ring and was generally a glib fellow, Louis was taciturn and never belittled his opponents. Johnson consorted publicly with white women, Louis privately. (All of Louis's wives were black.) Johnson ran afoul of the law, Louis became a model citizen, even enlisting in the Army during World War II and donating fight purses to the Armed Services. His civic sin of not paying his proper income tax, which haunted him in his later years, made him seem more a victim than a perpetrator.

Everyone knew that Louis was not a hustler or a scoundrel. He won the title in 1937 and fought his most important fight in June 1938 against the German (and rumored Nazi) Max Schmeling, who had knocked Louis out in 1936, Louis's only defeat at that stage in his career. Louis won the battle in a single round in which both (public) national and (private) racial pride were at stake. He subsequently became a great American hero, probably the most beloved of all boxing champions, and arguably the most beloved of all great American athletes. He held the title for over a dozen years and defended it twenty-five times, both records. At career's end, he wound up as a greeter in a Las Vegas casino, becoming a marginal figure of the sporting world that he had transcended during his career.

There are two important similarities between Ali, Johnson, and Louis that paradoxically hold the key to an essential difference. All three men were born Southerners, but in very different areas of the South: Johnson in the southwest of Texas, Louis in the Deep South of Alabama, and Ali in the border state of Kentucky. This, as much as anything, may explain the temperamental differences between them. All of them experienced Jim Crow, but not in the same era, and certainly not in the same geographical locale; the South, like every mythical American region, is a variegated place. But they also wound up gravitating toward the Middle West at

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crucial times in their lives: Johnson and Ali to Chicago as young adults, for the latter a place that was the sacred center of his religion and for the former the profane center of his nightclub business; and Louis to Detroit, where he grew up becoming both a boxer and, for a time, an auto worker.

And so there are important differences between Ali and Louis and Johnson. Unlike Louis, Ali was a braggart (sometimes a tasteless braggart) and a draft dodger (which made him similar to "slacker" Jack Dempsey, who was intensely disliked during most of his championship reign in the 1920s because he avoided service during World War I). And unlike Louis, Ali was a stylish, quick-moving boxer rather than a devastating, relatively immobile puncher (although Ali's most controversial victory, over Sonny Liston in their second fight, was a one-punch knockout during the stage in his career when he was not known for power). And unlike the patriotic and the quietistic Louis, Ali became openly political. He joined the Nation of Islam (the Black Muslims) in the early '60s, and he became a symbol for dissent when he refused military induction in 1967 on religious grounds, the first black person of note to challenge the view that blacks' claim to full citizenship required conspicuous displays of national loyalty that superseded the group's specialized claims for political and social justice. (Though Ali refused to be drafted on the grounds of being a Muslim, not on the grounds of being black, in the public mind his refusal was tantamount to a racial declaration.)

Despite the similarity between Johnson and Ali as politically persecuted black boxers, a similarity that many commentators have made much of, and which Ali's cornerman Bundini Brown exploited in 1970 in Ali's return-from-exile bout against Jerry Quarry by telling the champ that the ghost of Jack Johnson was in the house, there is much that distinguishes them. Most important is Ali's insistence that he did not want white women, and his absurd suggestion that the movement for integration in America was simply a movement for intermarriage. (It was a position nearly identical to that of Southern racists, and certainly not the common view of most blacks, for whom intermarriage was a relatively minor issue.) Ali felt that his resistance to the sexual blandishments of white women was a source of strength and purity, for these blandishments were, as far as he was concerned, another form of co-optation, and represented weakness and impurity in John-

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son. Ali may have been a rake (though he viewed his sensual adventures as lapses, and not as legitimate expressions of selfhood, in a world without morals), but Johnson was surely the king of the Corinthians, to use the famous eighteenth-century sporting term for the hustling swell and cockhound.

Ali did something that few boxing champions or athletes were ever able to do: he convinced most of the world for a considerable period of time that, to paraphrase Samuel Johnson, the natural flight of the champion was not from pleasure to pleasure but from hope to hope. His reign as America's most famous athlete exemplified a sincere, if fantastic, aspiration to be "the greatest." The showman-boxer made virtually every fight with any opponent who had a realistic chance of beating him into a moment of moral and political crisis in the culture. Ali was not altogether inaccurate when he compared himself to Elvis Presley. He lived in the margin between genius and mountebank, between the tawdry and the profound in American popular culture.

Thomas Hauser's book is not really a biography, it is only a piece of a biography. The book is just an oral history, in which Ali is seen through a cloud of witnesses, some of whom (George Plimpton, Howard Cosell, Freddie Pacheco, Angelo Dundee, Eddie Futch, Teddy Brenner, Jose Torres, and numerous sports writers) repeat what they have already said in interviews, articles, or books. (Others, such as Ali's oldest daughter Maryum, or Malcolm X's widow Betty Shabazz and daughter Attallah Shabazz, or Ali's current wife Lonnie, have new and sometimes intriguing perspectives to offer.) Now, it is not always the case that an oral history is an inadequate way to deal with a rich and complex subject, especially in trying to tackle certain intersecting aspects of African-American and American popular cultures. The problem here is that Ali, for all his complexities, is neither as broad nor as diverse a subject as, say, jazz, or the civil rights movement, both of which have been well served in recent years by oral histories.

Mowing through the often laudatory, sometimes trite, and frequently self-serving comments in Hauser's book is like suffering through an endless evening of testimonials. The book gives the overall impression of an author who has abdicated. For such a subject demands the interpretative prism that only a traditionally rendered, obsessively researched biography can provide. We do not need to be reminded that Ali was a great fighter, that he was (and is, presumably) a nice man with some religious convictions, that he was a courageous dissenter during the Vietnam War. What we need to be told is *why* Ali was all these things, and why these accomplishments or attributes were important to many people at a particular time in our history.

What we are given, instead, is something that resembles an anthology of back issues of *Sports Illustrated*. We are furnished, for example, with no picture of the Louisville of Ali's childhood and youth. What was the black community like in Louisville? What was Ali's family's social standing within the black community? Who constituted the black elite, and what were their relationships with whites? What was the educational environment of Ali's youth? How did the black community there respond to young Cassius Clay, amateur champion and Olympic hero? How did the black community respond to Ali's membership in the Nation of Islam? Was there a difference in how the Nation of Islam was perceived in the North and in the South, by blacks and by whites?

About the Nation of Islam little is said concerning the historical ties between Elijah Muhammad's group and other black cults like Father Divine, Daddy Grace, the Moorish Americans, and others. In truth, there is little in the Nation of Islam's political theology that is original: its dietary laws and hygienic preoccupations are largely taken from the Christian Scientists, the Jews, the orthodox Muslims, and the Seventh-day Adventists; its nationalistic pretensions from Garvey and the proto-Pan Africanists before him, such as Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and Edward Blyden, as well as nineteenth-century black utopians such as Isaiah Montgomery, Edward P. McCabe, and James E. Thompson; its mythological history from a mixture of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the "radical racial" amateur historicism of people like Hubert H. Harrison, the author of the essay collection *When Africa Awakes* (1920), and J.A. Rodgers, who produced the influential three-volume work *Sex and Race* (1942-52).

Hauser's book does not examine the essentially conservative nature of this insular and nationalistic African-American religion. Like the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Nation of Islam has little interest in those who are not within the group. In its way, it is very similar to Booker T. Washington in its call for black business enterprise. Indeed, the Nation's moral conservatism differs little from any standard black Christian denomination. It was precisely the conservative, standoffish nature of the group that so frustrated Malcolm X, who could never quite formulate an agenda of engagement and action while he belonged to the group. (Ali's refusal to be drafted, his own grand moment of heroism and relevance, was based rather paradoxically on the traditional Black Muslim stance of non-involvement.)

What the Muslims were most noted for is the apparent sense of "manhood" they gave their members. Robert Williams, in his notable 1962 book *Negroes with Guns*, gave the Muslims an unexpected endorsement for their militancy: "I learned in Atlanta that Mr. Muhammad had made quite an impression and that many Afro-Americans are learning, to the consternation and embarrassment of the black respectable leadership, that he has more to offer than weak prayers of deliverance."

Yet all the Muslim talk of gun clubs, and of self-defense squads that were to go south, and of other such projects, never came to anything. It is true that they did present an image of virility, anger, and strength. But how was Malcolm preventing a Muslim uprising at the 123rd Street police station in Harlem in April 1957 by dispersing an ugly crowd different from Martin Luther King dispersing an equally ugly and murderous black crowd on the night his home was bombed during the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott? Virility and militancy are not the stuff of politics or ideology, they are only the facade.

The nature of Ali's conversion to Islam was political, and even intellectual, in that it gave him a dogma to expound and made being in the public spotlight more comfortable, since he had a "relevant" message and even "distancing" answers to the generally inane questions posed by the white reporters who surrounded him. But it was a spiritual conversion as well: Ali accepted the myth of Yacub, that is, the sacred Black Muslim story of black racial superiority and its corollary of the need for racial separation from the impure and "beastly" whites. Ali's spirituality was based on the sort of skepticism about white supremacy that turned to the fantastic for a foundation. Like all early believers, he did not believe in allegory but in the actual propositions of his faith as valid explanations of the material world. This portion of the theology was discarded, however, after the death of Elijah Muhammad and the emer

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gence of Wallace D. Muhammad as leader of the movement. Moreover, by that time Ali was beyond his need for father and brother figures, which both Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X (as well as Herbert Muhammad and others) had been for him when he was the boy wonder of sports.

Not only does Hauser ignore all these dimensions of the Muslims, he also does not look into the darker side of the movement. Not one word is mentioned, for example, about Major Coxson, Ali's good friend and "unofficial financial adviser" (as Ali himself introduced him after the second Ali-Norton fight). Coxson sold Ali his Philadelphia home in the late 1960s and his Cherry Hill home in the early 1970s. (They lived on the same block in Cherry Hill.) They were good friends during Ali's years of exile (1967-70) and during the early years of his return to boxing. Coxson, a flamboyant hustler/businessman who had served time, ran unsuccessfully for mayor of Camden, New Jersey, in 1973.

On the night of June 8, 1973, Coxson was murdered, execution-style, in his Cherry Hill home by four black men, and his lover and two of her three children were seriously wounded in the attack. (The third child fled the home undetected and escaped injury.) Coxson, who had ties with the Philadelphia underworld figures Angelo Bruno and Lilian Reis, had no visible means of support, despite his ostentatious affluence. Rumors floated around the black communities in Philadelphia and New York about the connection between local mosques and organized crime, the substance of the business being drug peddling and extortion. Local black businesses in Philadelphia during this time complained of a group called the Black Mafia, which many believed was connected with the local mosque, putting the bite on them for "protection" money. Ali almost frantically distanced himself from Coxson and virtually disavowed knowing him at the time the murder was committed. Surely no life of Ali is complete without a thorough investigation of the Philadelphia and Cherry Hill years, without a thorough investigation of the New York and Philadelphia mosques.

Also Hauser dismisses, in a rather self-serving way, Ali's own autobiography, *The Greatest*. Whether that book is "true" or "authentic" is not the point. It was a major event in Ali's career, and it deserves scrutiny. Both Johnson and Louis produced questionable or apocryphal autobiographies, but they are still of considerable importance for the study of their subjects. Why was Toni Morrison, the editor who worked on Ali's book for Random House, not interviewed by Hauser? (She would have had more absorbing things to say than Cheryl Tiegs.) Why was the widow of Richard Durham, the book's ghostwriter, not interviewed? If it is true, as I have been told by reliable sources, that the book was really nothing more than a box of tapes (Durham seems to have taped virtually every conversation that Ali ever had), then it was really nothing more or less than Hauser's own book, which is itself a polished collection of tape recordings. And Ali's bio-pic *The Greatest*, in the tradition of Louis's *The Spirit of Youth* and Henry Armstrong's *Keep Punching*, should have been examined more closely as well.

It goes without saying (no, perhaps by now I should say) that Hauser's book has moments of insight, and it does provide a peek into the workings of a complex man. Yet those moments are few. The disappointment is especially surprising since Hauser is the author of *The Black Lights*, a very fine book that looks at the career of a minor fighter of the early '80s named Billy Costello and the world of professional boxing at that time.

And what about this world of boxing, this universe of taunting and challenge, this macho world where men soak their hands in pickle brine, rub their faces in olive oil, burn out the nerve endings in their noses, run miles through city streets and country roads, spar round after round in a gym, and go home to soak in Epsom salt for hours, sometimes paralyzed by pain, in preparation for a quaint sort of hand-to-hand battle that appeals because of its utter simplicity and its studied savagery? Is Muhammad Ali like Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Peter Jackson, Sam Langford, Joe Gans, and many other great black fighters who were ultimately reduced and finally destroyed by their years in the ring? And what is the meaning of our hero-worship of these men, of the cult of masculinity that boxing represents, of the achievement of the black male ego in American culture? Somewhere in the story of Muhammad Ali there are answers to these important questions. But Hauser's book is not the one that will take us, in pursuit of those answers, where we need to go.

GERALD EARLY, professor of English and African-American studies at Washington University in St. Louis, is the author of *Tuxedo Junction: Essays on American Culture* (Ecco).

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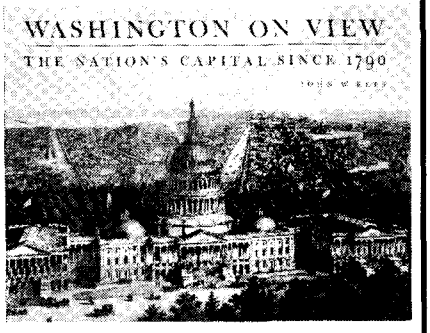

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The Sense of an Ending

BY HILLEL HALKIN

The Third Condition
by Amos Oz

(Maxwell-Macmillan-Keter, 260 pp.)

To Know a Woman
by Amos Oz
translated by Nicholas de Lange

(Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 262 pp., $19.95)

A curious thing has happened to the reputation of Amos Oz. Once acclaimed in Israel as the most accomplished Hebrew writer of his generation, he was little known abroad. Now he is lauded abroad, and he is increasingly attacked at home for failing to live up to his promise. As the critic Yehudit Oryan wrote last winter in a scathing review of his new novel, *The Third Condition*:

> A quarter of a century ago Hebrew prose enthroned a new crown prince.... Amos Oz was everything one could dream of: a native-born socialist aristocrat with flaxen hair, sculptured looks, stunning verbal ability, and a Hebrew pure as crystal. He was also a kibbutznik with a crucible-tested Zionism, the epitome of a different kind of Jew.... And then suddenly, as when migrating birds take flight all at once for a new destination, the critics began to turn on him in a monophonic chorus of complaints.

That may be overstating it. Oz's books remain steady best sellers in Israel, and he continues to have his admirers among the critics, too. But on the whole Hebrew reviewers have come down hard on him in recent years, which at first glance may pose something of a riddle. If they have been judging him on purely literary grounds, why have the same books reaped such praises abroad? If (as some of his defenders have claimed) they have envied him a success abroad that they cannot preen themselves on playing a part in, why have they continued to write favorably about other internationally recognized Hebrew novelists such as A. B. Yehoshua and David Grossman? If they are reacting to something in Oz's manner or endowments, or to the way he seems to style himself in his writing (and in the media) as the very incarnation of what Israelis call *yisra'el ha-yafa*, that nostalgically longed-for "beautiful Israel" whose superior virtue and idealism the years have not tarnished in him, how is he any different today from what he was when he was the critics' favorite?

As for *The Third Condition*, it begins with a riddle, too—that is to say, with a dream. The dreamer is the novel's bumbling hero, Efrayim Nisan, known to his friends as Fima, and Fima's dream, recorded by him in his journal and here somewhat abridged, is this (the translation that follows is mine):

> A far from pretty but appealing woman approached me, not via the counter [of the gynecological clinic where Fima works as a receptionist], but from behind, despite the sign that says, "Entrance for Employees Only."... "I have a daughter from you," she said. "It's time the girl got to know you." Although I knew it was forbidden to leave work and dangerous to go with her, especially barefoot ... I followed her down several streets and alleys and up some stairs and through some gates and cobblestoned courtyards that were in the Spanish city of Valladolid, although in fact, it was more or less the Bukharian Quarter of Jerusalem.... I asked her where we were and where were the children, because meanwhile the one girl had become many. "Karla," said the woman. I had no way of knowing if Karla was the name of the girl, or of the woman, who was pressing my hand to her breast, or if she was cold because the children were naked [*kar lah*="she is cold" in Hebrew], or if she was asking me to hug her and warm her. When I embraced her, she shook all over, not with desire but with despair, and said, "Don't be afraid, Efrayim. I know a way and I'll get you alive to the Aryan side." In the dream her whisper sounded full of loving promise, and I continued to trust her and believe in her, and to follow her in a joyous ecstasy without wondering at all how it was that in the dream she had become my mother or where the Aryan side was. Until we came to the water. The shoreline was straddled by a hefty man in a dark uniform and a blond military mustache who said: "Got to separate."
>
> And so I realized that she was cold because of the water and that I would never see her again. And I awoke in sorrow, and even now that I have finished writing this down, the sorrow still is with me.

In a well-constructed novel—and all of Oz's novels are extremely well constructed, perhaps better constructed than is good for them—a riddle comes with an answer, and in the course of reading *The Third Condition* we are given all the clues needed to make sense of Fima's dream. I will get to these. First, however, I would like to adduce two other passages from Oz's work, the first taken from one of his earliest stories and the second from one of his latest books.

In the short story "Where the Jackals Howl," which appeared in 1963, we find the following description (in Philip Simpson's translation) of a kibbutz like the one in which Oz himself lived for many years:

> At this twilight hour our world is made up of circles within circles. On the outside is the circle of the autumn darkness, far from here, in the mountains and the great deserts. Sealed and enclosed within it is the circle of our night landscape, vineyards and orchards and plantations. A dim lake astir with whispering voices. Our lands betray us in the night. Now they are no longer familiar and submissive, crisscrossed with irrigation pipes and dirt tracks. Now our fields have gone over to the enemy's camp. They send out waves to us of alien scents. At night we see them bristling in a miasma of threat and hostility and returning to their former state, as they were before we came to this place.
>
> The inner circle, the circle of lights, keeps guard over our houses and over us, against the accumulated menace outside. But it is an ineffective wall, it cannot keep out the smells of the foe and his voices. At night the voices and the smells touch our skin like tooth and claw.
>
> And inside, in the innermost circle of all, in the heart of our illuminated world, stands Sashka's writing desk. The table lamp sheds a calm circle of brightness and banishes the shadows from the stack of papers. The pen in his hand darts to and fro and the words take shape. "There is no stand more noble than that of the few against the many," Sashka is fond of saying.

Sashka, a middle-aged kibbutz intellectual, is not at home as these words are being spoken, and he does not know that two simultaneous events are taking place in the kibbutz. One is that, in the very "heart of the illuminated world" that is his small apartment, his nubile daughter Galila is on the verge

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of being half-seduced and half-raped by a virile but depraved kibbutznik old enough to be her father; the other, that a young jackal, bursting with sleek energy ("sensuous, pulsating currents are alive in it, flowing from body to body, being to being, vibration to vibration"), has just been caught, "drawn to the smell of blood and flesh," in a trap in the kibbutz fields and is painfully waiting to die. There is a parallel between Sashka's daughter and the jackal; a polarity, too; and between these positives and negatives runs a circuit of tense prose that makes the story genuinely electric.

And now let us jump to the introduction that Oz wrote in 1987 for his volume of essays *The Slopes of Lebanon.* We read there (in Maurie Goldberg-Bartura's translation):

> But among the victims of the Lebanon War was "the Land of Israel, small and brave, determined and righteous." It died in Lebanon precisely because ... its back was not to the wall. *It* was the wall and *they*, the Palestinians in Lebanon, had their backs pressed to the wall. From underneath ... the myths, the claws peeked out. Just as they continue to peek out daily; not only in the occupied territories, but also in the "good Israel of old"—in the suburbs and in the cities, on the crazy peripheries as well as in the enlightened, sane center, in the slums and on the campuses, among the hotheads and among the intelligentsia, and in the heart of the corridors of power.
>
> After Lebanon, we can no longer ignore the monster, even when it is dormant, or half asleep, or when it peers out from behind the lunatic fringe.... It is here, among us, a part of us, like a shadow, in Hebron, in Gaza, in the slums and in the suburbs; in the kibbutzim and in my Lake Kinneret—"O Lake Kinneret mine, were you real or only a dream?..."

"O Lake Kinneret Mine"—*hoy, kinneret sheli*—is a lyric written in the 1920s by the poet Rahel that has become a well-known Hebrew folk song; here it functions as an allusive epitaph for the *yisra'el ha-yafa* that—in the minds of its inhabitants at least—was still synonymous with Israeli society as a whole when Oz wrote "Where the Jackals Howl." And yet the remarkable thing is how, over the span of the years, the controlling image in these two so different examples of his prose has remained the same. In both we have an inward-turned and besieged-feeling community—the kibbutz in one case, the Jewish state in the other—defensively facing a world that is perceived as hostile, bloody, and threatening; in both this threat has an obverse side—the "non-Jewish" animal vitality of the jackal, the lure of manly foreign adventure that Lebanon for a while seemed to be—that is disturbingly attractive; and in both, as in a bad dream, these two poles prove suddenly fluid and switch identities. The bestial savagery that was thought to lurk outside the gates turns out to have been inside them all along. The alien but alluring outer menace is revealed to be a violated victim. Nothing is what it had seemed to be; nothing can be the same again.

And yet in "Where the Jackals Howl" there are not two but three "circles of light" that psychologically project their inner darkness outward. The first, shutting out "the mountains and the great deserts," is indeed the society, the polis of Israel; the second, "betrayed" at night by its own fields, is the kibbutz, the extended family of the narrator; the third is Sashka's study, "the heart of our illuminated world"—that is, the ratiocinating ego. Nor do we find this pattern only here. On the contrary, it is one of the most consistent features of Oz's work, which is characterized on the whole by thematic repetitions that give it a great inner coherence.

In nearly all his fiction, macrocosm is matched by microcosm: the same Trojan horse of denial and projection that operates in society at large is in the breasts of each of its members, eating away from within at their sense of reality and at the very defenses against evil that it ostensibly serves to maintain. Sometimes the two circles are superimposed, as in Oz's story "Late Love" (1971), in which an elderly Labor Party ideologue develops a paranoid obsession with a Communist plot to destroy the Jews, which enables him to exorcise his own murderous hatred of the Jewish society that is abandoning him to the indignities of a lonely old age. In a companion piece, a story called "Unto Death," the Jewish-gentile equation is reversed: here a band of bone-weary Crusaders murders an imagined Jew in its midst because he symbolizes his executioners' unconfessable desire to lay down the Cross and go home.

Generally, however, Oz draws his circles concentrically, the private ego surrounded by family and society, which it reflects and comments upon while possessing a dynamic of its own. And often at the bottom of this dynamic, egos being what they are, is an unsuccessfully repressed oedipality. In "Where the Jackals Howl," Galila's near rapist-seducer, she learns, may be her illegitimate father. In "The Hill of Evil Counsel" (1976), one of Oz's finest stories, a boy's first sexual experience (he is masturbated by two women who are his baby sit-

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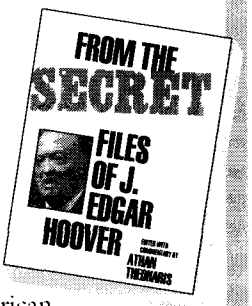

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ters) occurs simultaneously with the seduction of his mother at a party in front of his father's eyes. In *To Know A Woman*, Oz's most recent novel to appear in English, a subtle web of sexualized relationships (as the Israeli scholar Nitza Ben-Dov has shown) entangles three generations of the same family. In Fima's dream, as we have seen, the erotic figure whom he follows through the streets is, or at least turns into, his mother.

In Fima's dream, too, the motif of a beleaguered Jewish "us" set against an ambiguous gentile "them" recurs as well. On the one hand, we have the ghettolike streets of a city that, after an initial attempt to conceal its identity, is understood by the dreamer to be his native Jerusalem; on the other hand, there is the "Aryan side" to which he must cross over. And, the "Aryan side" means, paradoxically, both safety and risk: it is at one and the same time the place where a Jew can best escape doom and the place where he is in greatest danger. Is this not in fact a dream-reworking of the dual symbolism that the gentile woman intrinsically has for the oedipally ensnarled Jewish son? As the radically exogamous, she is a flight from oedipality; as the radically forbidden, its surrogate fulfillment.

Fima himself, however, although he religiously records all his dreams, is noticeably indifferent to what they have to tell him about himself. A nudnik, a leech, a one-book poet, an armchair politician, a coffee-klatch pundit, a pro-Palestinian-state-peacenik, a self-appointed moral linesman of the Israeli left, a sleeper with his friends' wives and infantile provoker of the elderly right-wing father who helps support him, an emotionally undeveloped 54-year-old baby who for some not entirely clear reason is adored both by the women he is singularly inept with in bed and by their husbands, he prefers to gloss his dreams as if they were a mixture of social commentary and science fiction. The Aryan side? Why, certainly:

> In another hundred years life would be more alive, more energetic, more logical and full of vitality. The wars with the Arabs would be remembered with a shrug, as an absurd cycle of vague tribal quarrels.... Instead of eggs fried in sticky oil, instead of jam and yogurt, everyone would swallow some pills every two or three hours and there would be no more need to eat.... People would busy themselves all day long with useful, exciting things, and devote their evenings to science and to beauty; their lives would be led by the dictates of pure reason; and if love should rear its head, the prospects of translating it into physical intimacy would be ascertainable by the exchange of a miniature, remote-control, electromagnetic pulse. The winter rains would be banished from Jerusalem and diverted to the agricultural provinces. Everyone would cross peacefully to the Aryan side.

In short, we are in familiar Oz territory: just as society casts its troubled dreams onto the Other in the guise of "the Enemy," so the individual, in this case Fima, lays his inner complexes on society. Fima's obsessive preoccupation with Israeli politics, and specifically with the intifida, which is so constantly on his mind that he phones his friends at odd hours of the day and night to hector them about it, is a form of hidden aggression no less than his utopian fantasies of a future (called by him, in misinterpretation of his own dream, "the Aryan side") without wars, carnality, or problematic sex are a reaction formation to his own oedipally arrested sexuality. Like all apostles of a conflictless world, he is a man brimming with unacknowledged conflict. He is, indeed, a satire on the attitudes of the Israeli liberal left, the politics of peace exposed as the psychology of resentment—or rather, the psychology of resentment masquerading as the politics of peace.

In all of this, *The Third Conation* is a pointedly witty comedy, the first humorous novel attempted by Oz, who has in the past written some very funny scenes that were mere changes of pace in fundamentally somber settings. In its way it is a courageous book too, because its humor is often directed against its author, who has never been noted for his ability to laugh at himself. Many of Fima's pronouncements are direct parodies of things that Oz has said or written, as when he declares that "the occupied territories are nothing more than the shadow side of our own selves," or when he comments that

> underneath, this whole country is seething with a secret insanity. Three times a week our long arm reaches out to apprehend the murderers in their lair.... Every morning we catch Eichmann all over again, and every evening we kill Hitler as a child. In [international] basketball games we whip Chmielnitski and in [European] song contests we avenge Kishinev.

This is not so much Fima quoting Oz as Oz mocking himself via Fima.

So far, so good. As *The Third Condition* approaches its final pages, the schlemiel-like Fima, sublimely unaware of what makes him tick and always with the best of intentions, has managed to spill the proverbial soup on practically everyone while remaining dry himself—all in anticipation, one assumes, of some ultimately sobering comeuppance. But oh, those final pages! In them, for the fourth consecutive time, Oz has seriously marred a perfectly good novel with a totally inappropriate ending. And what is more curious yet, it has been the same ending each time.

It is an ending equivalent to a Christian love feast, in which adversaries embrace, the kiss of peace is exchanged, and the embroilments of Eros yield to the beatitudes of Agape. In *A Perfect Peace* (1982), this takes the form of a ménage-à-trois wherein two kibbutzniks who have been warring over the same woman learn happily to share her between them, along with her bed and the child she has borne them. In *Black Box* (1987), we find ourselves in a bucolic commune in which the mem-

Queen Recluse

If, then, the moon would be a good place to place the Jews,
Then I must stay here in a province of terrestrial jewelled
Heathens, I will stay at home & worshipping. With no promise
Of an afterlife, then I will comb the moors in rainy April
When the heathers are discolored by the rusts of a restless
Consumptive season, the stone walls of the parsonage ablaze
With little germs & breathe my brother's madness, his
Melancholias, take in the liquid punishments of eventual
Seclusion, a hand-bound bottle-green anonymous & fascicled
Collection of some Poetry in hand. Even the dog will die of age
Near me. Where would a Christian do her perishing? Monochrome
Life, a galaxy of light benigned in the planet's time it takes
To reach me wandering this rusted liquid earth of rain & rain, raking
Moors with metronomes of prayer. Earthly lesion, parish of my home.

LUCIE BROCK-BROIDO

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bers of a broken family who have been clawing each other like alley cats end up living in rustic harmony. In *To Know A Woman*, the protagonist, a retired Israeli intelligence operative who has been searching for significance while trying to maneuver among a rebellious daughter, a nagging mother, a mother-in-law who blames him for his wife's death, and a sexually kinky neighbor who is sweet on him finds the meaning of life in the raptures of volunteer work in a hospital, where he attends in saintly fashion to the sores and chancres of the terminally ill.

And in *The Third Condition*? In *The Third Condition* we have the third condition, a semimystical state of illumination discovered by Fima that is neither "sleeping nor waking" but "a light that flooded [him] from without and also from within," a form of "grace, the attainment of which meant stripping oneself of all will. Standing beneath the night sky, a man of no age, of no sex, of no time, of no people: a man with nothing." "Nothing," though, is something of a metaphor, since in the very days when Fima happens upon this state of bliss, his father dies and leaves him a small fortune, which includes a profitable factory, lots of cash, a new self-confidence that dazzles the loyal friends gathered lovingly around him, and the chance to finally live without Daddy.

What are we, Oz's readers, to make of this? That entering the kingdom of heaven means getting rid of the Father, but that the Father can be gotten rid of with impunity only by sacrificing one's sexuality, indeed, one's very identity, and returning to a third condition that is neither childhood nor adulthood but something as undifferentiated and undifferentiating as early infancy? This would seem to be the symbolic logic of it—yet it provides a far from logical resolution to a novel that, however comic, is presumably not about the pleasures of wish fulfillment but about reality and the payments it exacts.

The same point could be made about the *ex machina* conclusions of Oz's previous three novels, too. The problem is not only that these are unbelievable in themselves, at least to Israelis (one has the impression that Oz's reviewers abroad, if not his readers, consider Israel to be a society so transcending the laws of human nature that anything can happen in it)—that, for example, two heterosexual men idyllically going partners in the woman they both love is not the way the males of any species, except perhaps for snails, behave in real life, and that an ex-Mossad agent, no matter how many roles he has played, cannot convincingly slip into that of St. Francis of Assisi. It is also that they are a betrayal of Oz's own work.

Know thyself, or else: this is the underlying substance of nearly everything that Oz has written, whether fiction or political essay, and in his earlier and more internally consistent books the "or else" is dire indeed, meting out to individuals, families, kibbutzim, and the Jewish state death, corruption, loss, lovelessness, despoliation, and disillusionment as the wages of self-ignorance. It is a bleak message, but it rings true in the mouth of its messenger, certainly truer than the vision of paradise regained by means of a polymorphous love that endangers no one because it encompasses everyone in its oceanic soup.

"Got to separate," says the uniformed soldier or policeman in Fima's dream—who, one assumes, functions there as an authority or reality symbol. Is his dream telling Fima that he still has not separated emotionally from his mother, although she has been dead for many years? Apparently. That he must separate out the ambiguous content of "the Aryan side," which stands for opposites that need to be distinguished? That too. That he must separate the woman called "Karla" from the girl who is his "daughter," and that girl from the many "naked children" she becomes—that is, learn to tell the difference between the various kinds of love (erotic, filial, paternal, fraternal, humanitarian) that are hopelessly confused in his mind? Yes, also that. Indeed, Fima—although he knows exactly where he stands on the intifida and just how the government of Israel must solve the Palestinian problem—has a subconscious as untidy as his own cockroach-ridden kitchen and can only grow up if he makes some order there. And yet this is precisely what *The Third Condition* indulgently excuses him from having to do.

Indeed, Oz has got to separate, too: between the clarifying power of the imagination and the indiscriminate fudgings of fantasy, between the needs of a novel and the neediness of its characters or its readers. Why his recourse to fatuously happy endings has gone hand-in-hand with his increasing fame and experience as a writer is a question that only he can answer. And yet while the answer belongs to that "innermost circle of all" that circumscribes him and his writing desk, it perhaps also has to do with his sense of himself as a public figure whose novels, despite his occasional pro forma protestations to the contrary, are clearly intended to be read as political and social commentaries on the Israeli scene.

It is one thing, after all, to let a story end darkly when it is about imaginary individuals, and quite another to do so when it is also, at least by allegorical implication, about the embattled society of which one is an emblematic spokesman. In this respect, Oz is but one of several twentieth-century Hebrew writers who have chosen, or allowed the belletristic needs of Zionism to impose on them, the double burden of being both a private author and a public muse. The classic case of this was Hayim Nahman Bialik, who was barely out of his teens when he was crowned the "national poet" of the Jewish people—and no one was more aware than Bialik of the corrosive influence on his work of such a role (which on the whole, like Oz's recent novels, played better in the Diaspora than in Hebrew-speaking Palestine). Often—and, with bitterly paradoxical irony, in visionary language—Bialik castigated himself for allowing the vatic

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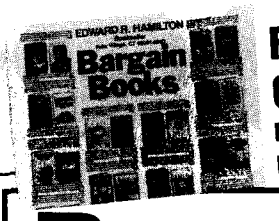

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mantle to muffle his true voice. "Kick down your altar," he wrote in a poem called "Word,"

> And wipe away with a stroke the spidery webs
> That cling in your heart to the strings of your lute,
> From which you have woven yourself a
> Song of Rebirth and a Vision of Salvation,
> False oracles and deceptions . . .
>
> Open your mouth, you prophet of last things,
> And if you have a word—say it!
> Though it be bitter as death, yes, though it *be* death—
> Say it!

HILLEL HALKIN is a writer and translator living in Israel.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

expansion? If they didn't, then Mr. McIntyre is right; if they did, then he is wrong. But shouldn't the burden of proof be on the shoulders of those who argue that even though tax cuts and prosperity coincided with each other, there was no connection between the two events?

Moreover, isn't it slightly contradictory for the left to argue that the rich got fabulously wealthy under the "trickle down" Reagan philosophy, and then to argue that if taxes had not been cut, they would have been just as rich anyway?

STEPHEN MOORE
Washington, D.C.

The writer is director of fiscal policy studies at the Cato Institute.

Robert S. McIntyre replies:

Stephen Moore argues that the "supply-side" tax changes didn't take effect until 1983. This implies that the deep 1982 recession was the product of the pre-'83 tax law, and the post-'82 performance of the economy was the product of laws that took effect in 1983 and thereafter.

Well, OK. If Moore is ready to repudiate the 1978 "supply-side" capital gains tax cut (effective November 1 of that year), the huge array of corporate loopholes and high-income tax-shelter incentives enacted in 1981 (effective January 1, 1981), the 1981 capital gains tax cut (June 9, 1981), and the 1981 cut in the top tax rate on unearned income from 70 percent to 50 percent (January 1, 1982), then he has an argument of sort. But if Mr. Moore is willing to repudiate all of these things, then what's left of "supply-side" economics?

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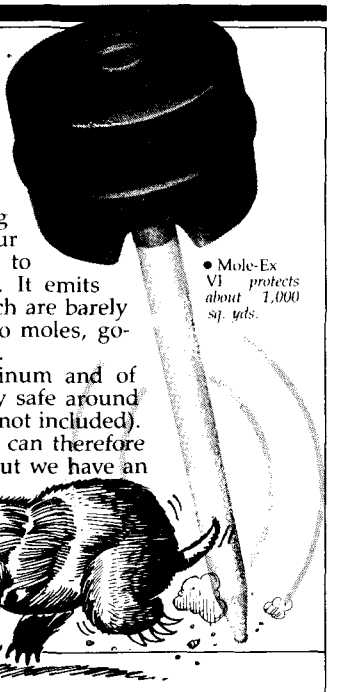

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God forgiven

To the editors:

In her review of Gregory Vlastos's new book on Socrates ("The Chill of Virtue," September 16 & 23), Martha Nussbaum presents us with an excessively rationalistic characterization of the Greek philosopher that is confounded by the texts. For example, her assertions that "deference to external authority has no place in the search for wisdom" and that "God and man, instead of bargaining with one another, *the self-interest of each uppermost,* join as ethical beings in an enterprise that seeks the good" (my emphasis) misrepre-sent what is stated plainly in many passages from the *Apology.* Here are just a few: "I shall call upon the god at Delphi as witness to the existence and nature of my wisdom, if it be such"; "I do know, however, that it is wicked and shameful to do wrong, to disobey one's superior, be he god or man"; "Gentlemen of the jury, I am grateful and I am your friend, but I will obey the god rather than you, and as long as I draw breath and am able, I shall not cease to practice philosophy." One might come away from a reading of Ms. Nussbaum's review without any hint of the centrality of Socrates' religious experiences to his philosophical activity.

JOHN BUSSANICH
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Martha Nussbaum replies:

In the passages cited by Mr. Bussanich, I was paraphrasing Mr. Vlastos's views, not offering any original view of my own. And I believe that Mr. Bussanich misunderstands the claims about divinity that Mr. Vlastos, as I report him, is making. Mr. Vlastos's claim is that (to quote my review) "Socrates does indeed believe in supernatural deities and divine signs but . . . his deities are required to meet the stringent standard of his ethical views. His gods must do no wrong and tell no lies. . . . And piety is reconstrued in an equally radical way, as 'doing god's work to benefit human beings.'" Self-interest, Vlastos claims, is replaced by a truly moral partnership. The point about external authority was made in the context of discussing Socrates' view that "the unexamined life is not worth living for a human being"—the point being that Socrates' religion enjoins on him ceaseless self-examination, an activity that could not be replaced by deference to the gods as authorities. The question is not whether Socrates believes in and obeys the god(s), but what sort of gods he believes in and what they command him to do. •

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TRB *continued from page 4*

them? The current fad for term limits on Congress and other elected offices is the silliest expression of America's failure of democratic followership. As has been noted, its message is: Stop me before I vote again.

Of course most American citizens don't vote most of the time. There are commentators who excuse this, too, as demonstrating a healthy contempt for politicians or, more grandly, a healthy democratic contentment. People should not be scolded for ignoring their franchise, the argument goes. In a properly functioning society, politics is rightly of marginal concern to good citizens. They are far wiser to attend to their families instead, or bake cookies, chase butterflies, write poetry.

For a seemingly populist argument, this is amazingly patronizing. After all, those making it spend much of their own waking hours thinking about politics and public policy. They do not do so because they think that such matters are of marginal importance. They are not showing humility by taking over this grim duty of caring about politics, as a saint might by washing the feet of the poor and sick. They think about politics precisely because they do believe it's an important subject, and they believe their views on the subject are especially important. It's just other people's views that don't matter, apparently.

Criticizing the citizenry for the sins of the politicians sounds undemocratic. It is reminiscent of Brecht's famous caustic crack that when people lose confidence in the government, the government should "dissolve the people and elect a new one." Politicians prefer to tell the people they're wonderful. Even Jimmy Carter, in his legendarily downbeat "malaise" speech, burbled about "my belief in the decency and the strength and the wisdom of the American people." George Bush says "real people" have it all over those icky politicians.

Respect for democracy does not require this type of pandering. It does not assume that the people are inherently wise and any error of the political system is a failure of the officials they choose to elect. Genuine respect for democracy does not let the voters off the hook by putting all the blame on leaders—like blaming parents for their misbehaving children. Real respect for democracy takes it for granted that government is by the people when it performs badly, just as when it performs well.

Jimmy Carter's campaign slogan was, "A government as good as its people." That's just about what we've got.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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Do the media feed us fiction, instead of facts?

We all know that, by dint of constant repetition, white can be made to appear black, good can get transformed into evil, and myth may take the place of reality. Israel, with roughly one-thousandth of the world's population and with a similar fraction of the territory of this planet, seems to engage a totally disproportionate attention of the print and broadcast media. Unfortunately, much of what the media tell us – in reporting, editorializing, and in analysis – are endlessly repeated myths.

What are some of these myths?

■ **Myth:** The "Palestinians" are a nation and therefore deserving of a homeland.
Reality: The concept of Palestinian nationhood is a new one and had not been heard of until after the Six-Day War, when Israel, by its victory, came into the administration of the territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip. The so-called "Palestinians" are no more different from the Arabs in the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, than Wisconsinites are from Iowans.

■ **Myth:** Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank"), and the Gaza Strip are "occupied Arab territory".
Reality: All of "Palestine" – east and west of the Jordan River – was part of the League of Nations mandate. Under the Balfour Declaration all of it was to be the "national home for the Jewish people". In violation of this mandate, Great Britain severed the entire area east of the Jordan – about 75% of Palestine, and gave it to the Arabs, who created on it the kingdom of Transjordan. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, five Arab armies invaded the new country in order to destroy it at its very birth. They were defeated by the Israelis. The Transjordanians, however, remained in occupation of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and East Jerusalem. They proceeded to drive all Jews from those territories and to systematically destroy all Jewish houses of worship and other institutions. The Transjordanians, now renamed "Jordanians" were the occupiers. Israel regained these territories following its victory in the Six-Day War and has administered them ever since. They have not been annexed. Their final status will be decided if and when the Arabs will ever sit down to talk peace with Israel.

■ **Myth:** Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") are the "greatest obstacle to peace".
Reality: This is a totally new formulation, recently put forward by Secretary of State Baker. He and the president seem to be obsessed by it. Fewer than 100,000 Jews are settled in these territories, living among about 1.4 million Arabs. How can Jews living there be an obstacle to peace? Why *shouldn't* they live there? About 700,000 Arabs live in Israel proper. They are not an obstacle to peace and nobody, including the Israelis, consider them as such.

■ **Myth:** Israel is unwilling to yield "land for peace".
Reality: The concept that to the loser, rather than to the victor, belong the spoils is a radically new one, never before thought of in world history. Israel has emerged victorious in the five wars imposed on it by the Arabs. In order to make peace, it has returned over 90% of the territory occupied by it, specifically the vast Sinai Peninsula, to Egypt. That territory contained some of the most advanced military installations in the world, prosperous cities and settlements, and oil fields developed entirely by Israel that made it independent of petroleum imports. In the Camp David Accords (1983) Israel agreed to autonomy for Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") with the permanent status to be determined after three years. No responsible Palestinian representation has been available to negotiate with Israel about this.

The greatest myth of all is that Israel's administration of the Gaza Strip and of Judea/Samaria is the root cause of the conflict between Arabs and Jews. But that is nonsense and flies in the face of historical reality. The Arab desire to obliterate the Jewish presence in Palestine, and since 1948 the Jewish state long predates that territorial administration. The root cause of the conflict is the total unwillingness of the Arabs to tolerate any "non-believers" to be in control of even one inch of what they consider "sacred Arab soil". And they don't just mean Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip. They mean Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the whole state of Israel. No change in the Arabs' attitude seems to be in the offing. But until there is such a change, no peace can possibly come to this troubled area.

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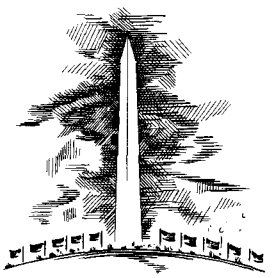
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Mercy

I HELPED "TAKE BACK THE NIGHT" here a couple of weeks ago. The rally and march were part of Rape Awareness Week, and this year's theme was "Turning Anger into Change." As it turned out, the anger was directed more at an amorphously phallocentric society than at individual assailants. Every speaker shouted things like, "As women, as lesbians, as everyone under the rainbow together, we're going to advance women and defeat the patriarchy." Rape was just another form of oppression, like pornography or mail-order brides. Reality intervened on a couple of occasions: Once, when they gave us inch-long whistles to blow on cue, after a screeching "No!!!" from the podium; unfortunately, our response could only achieve a wan tweet-tweet. Then, after the D.C. Self-Defense Karate Association demonstrated how women too can look like savages when fighting, we in the crowd were instructed to go home and practice "looking someone in the eye and disagreeing." When it came time to march, the men were told to stay behind and discuss how they contribute to our patriarchal culture. Sponsored by D.C. Men Against Rape, this forum "to break the silence to end men's violence" consisted of men confessing to being "the problem," and then promising to make "changes" in their lives, such as not listening to sexist jokes. One man began to cry. Handouts suggested that men read such books as *Refusing to Be a Man* by John Stoltenberg, which declares that male sexual identity is entirely "a political and social construction" whose ethics are "essentially rapist." To join D.C. MAR, you need to make sixteen "pledges," including: to "work to end my own abusive, controlling, and manipulative behavior," "act to transform white/male-dominated corporations, organizations & governments," and "listen carefully to women." The streets of Washington should feel much safer now.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, DATE RAPE FIGured prominently in this year's Week. Clarence Thomas hasn't been charged with date rape (yet), but you can't pick up a newspaper these days without discovering that some celebrity, say Mike Tyson or Run of Run-DMC, is being accused of it. Talk shows have devoted hours to survivors speaking out; songs have been banned from the airwaves (one by country-western singer Holly Dunn featured the line "When I say no I mean maybe or maybe I mean yes"); and underwear has been dropped from stores (on one style the word "no" insidiously turned to "yes" in the dark). Colleges have sponsored seminars, videos, and manuals aimed at teaching students the correct way to seduce. Not to be outdone, Andrea Dworkin has just published her second novel, *Mercy*, in which the protagonist, named Andrea (meaning "courage"), relates her transformation from child of liberal Jewish parents to alcoholic nomad who kills homeless men while they're sleeping—the result of a life of brutal rapes (all types) and sexual assaults, age 9 onward.



OF COURSE, I UNDERstand that women have been raped on dates, that many people never knew this was possible, and that rape by a friend is just as serious a crime as rape by a stranger. But in attempting to raise our consciousness the anti-date-rapers have lost their senses. Aside from repeating the silly mantra "No Means No," these feminists have broadened the definition of rape to include "nonviolent psychological coercion": if a man verbally pressures a woman into having sex, she can cry date rape the next morning. In other words, yes can mean no because women are "socialized" to submit. Even a false accusation of rape can prove useful. "I think it ideally initiates a process of self-exploration ... 'If I didn't violate her, could I have?'," Catherine Comins, assistant dean of student life at Vassar, told *Time*. According to Neil Gilbert, a professor of social welfare at Berkeley, the expanded definition explains a good part of the discrepancy between the most widely cited rape statistics—one in four college women is a victim of rape or attempted rape and more than half know their attackers—and that of the Bureau of Justice Statistics: one in 1,000 women. (Angered by Gilbert's heresy and such unsympathetic remarks in class as "Comparing real rape to date rape is like comparing cancer to the common cold," his female students launched a protest, chanting: "Cut it out or cut it off!") Anti-date-rapers warn that every man is a potential rapist, that women have much more to fear from their boyfriends than strangers, and that women may not realize that they've been raped. These feminists claim that women bear no responsibility if an evening ends in unsolicited sex. As date rape expert Mary Koss says: "It's the man's penis that is doing the raping, and ultimately he's responsible for where he puts it."

SOME CONSERVATIVES HAVE FOUND all of this irresistible. They see the latest feminist fixation as nothing more than a belated admission that the sexual revolution unleashed male beastliness against the fairer sex. In this month's *Commentary*, Norman Podhoretz reviews how feminists long ago realized that the sexual revolution was a disaster for women (making them feel "cheap and even—though the word would never have been permitted to enter their minds—immoral"). Unable to turn all women into lesbians, the feminists set out to change "the relation between the sexes" so that the females would have the upper hand. Their latest strategy is the date rape scare and its attendant directives for women. Podhoretz predicts that this new "sexual dispensation" will precipitate a rise in "the number of 'wimps'" and in "the incidence of male impotence," forcing women into lives of "loneliness, frustration, resentment, and sterility." Good try, I suppose, but it sounds like a better description of women's sex lives *before* the '60s.

AT LEAST ONE PERSON SEEMS HAPPY with today's sexual climate. Camille Paglia, who is beginning to sound like Ayn Rand on mushrooms, told a *Spin* interviewer that rape is "part of the risk of freedom" that women demanded. The danger of rape is also part of the "sizzle of sex": "If [rape] is a totally devastating psychological experience for a woman, then she doesn't have the proper attitude about sex." Paglia wrote in *Newsday* that women simply have to understand men's "biologically programmed"—and thus uncontrollable—need for "[h]unt, pursuit, and capture." Women must constantly watch what they say, do, wear, and where they go so that they won't provoke a man sexually: "The only solution to date rape is female self-awareness and self control.... When [a woman] makes a mistake, she must accept the consequences and, through self-criticism, resolve never to make that mistake again." So on the one hand we have a socially constructed view of gender that places all blame for rape on the male, and on the other, a biologically deterministic one that places all responsibility on the female. Could it be that there's some middle ground, where both sexes have responsibility—men for their actions, women for their inaction? Naah.

KAREN LEHRMAN

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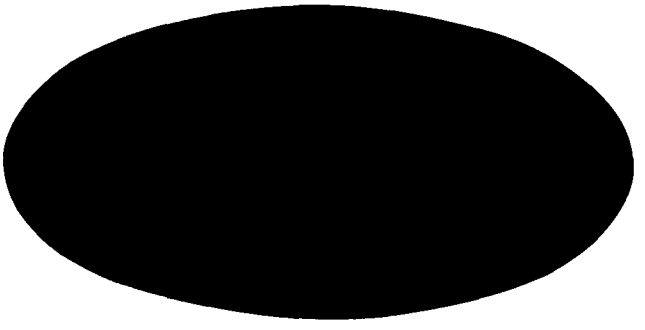

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